

THE  
**METROPOLITAN.**

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## THE SECRETARY.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROCK," "GUARDS, HUSSARS, AND INFANTRY," "THE BEAUTY OF THE RHINE," ETC., ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XIX.\*

LEONTES.—"I am a feather for each wind that blows."

WINTER'S TALE.

WE must now turn back to our party, whom we left carousing at "Long's," on the same evening as that which ushered Frederick Garston into Sir George Elms's mansion in Green-street, and from whence he departed in a far different mood from the temper wherewith he entered the dwelling.

Occupied with ruminations on the unfortunate incidents of the evening, together with anticipations of evil which most probably would result from his unguarded conduct, the unhappy secretary turned his way towards the hotel which the baronet had appointed as their place of meeting; and truly painful were the retrospections which forced themselves on his memory during the walk; neither was their poignancy in any degree alleviated by the conviction that to his own folly must be attributed the dilemma in which he stood.

There are few epochs in a man's existence so little enviable as the vain and fruitless regrets which, when the excitement of the moment has passed away, invariably follow up the commission of an act of folly or of crime. The greater the compunctions, and the deeper the repinings, the more acutely must the futility of after remorse be acknowledged; and truly has it been said that, when on the threshold of deviating from the right path, were it possible for the wavering victim to anticipate one tenth part of the misery which is irremediably certain to ensue, many would turn away from temptation, and thus bid defiance to the stings of that worst of all torments, a disapproving conscience.

\* Continued from page 357, vol. lvii.

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But our hero's delinquency on this occasion did not admit of such serious construction, since the leading feature of his offence might have been laid to the charge of inexperience, aided, we must acknowledge, by intemperance, which, however, had been as it were forced upon him by a well-practised hand, and for purposes undreamt of by the unsuspecting novice.

Yet though the fault committed did not in reality amount to what might be termed a perpetration of crime, there was quite sufficient to cause Frederick Garston considerable uneasiness as well as unavailing regret. And now that the intoxicating fumes of Sir George's wines were fast passing away from his brain, most sincerely, though vainly, did he regret having allowed himself for an instant to cast aside that caution which, in his vain presumption, he imagined was ever at his command, and impervious as a coat of mail.

His error was now palpably visible to his own eyes, and in looking forward to the result what could he contemplate but ruin in its worst shape? That Lord Dropmore would cause the whole affair to be repeated to the marquis did not admit of doubt; and what result might he reckon upon from the communication, except his own dismissal from a house the inmates whereof he would rather have died for than have offended, had he been in possession of his usual caution.

The indelicacy of proposing the name of Emily Beecher at a Bacchanalian orgie was too glaring to admit of any interpretation save that it arose from unwarrantable presumption or momentary aberration of intellect, neither of which excuses could be regarded as admissible.

Exclusive of these and many other disagreeable reflections on the night's adventure, the dread of how Emily might receive the assurance of his turpitude was by far the most painful. Would she not spurn him from her presence when informed that, owing to his infatuated folly, *her* name was made the subject of a midnight brawl?—and with whom? With the son, the only son, of his benefactor, his kind and indulgent friend. On whatever side the dejected defendant viewed the picture, there was little subject for consolation, and last, though not least, rose up the anticipation of the result which his expected interview with the baronet might produce.

In this state of mind Frederick Garston reached the place of meeting, and little heeding who at that moment occupied the apartment, he entered the coffee-room, and, seating himself at the remotest corner, betook himself to a second edition of regrets.

Occupied as Colonel Handstop, Major Storkley, and the Honourable Mark Cooley found themselves, and however con-

genial their occupation, the entrance of the secretary did not escape the prying gaze of the major, who, raising his eyes somewhat above the level of his spectacles, thereby giving an additional depth to the numerous wrinkles which adorned his forehead, mentally determined on sifting to the bottom the cause of so uncommon an occurrence as meeting Lord Blanchard's handsome secretary at such an hour and alone, in what he imagined must have proved to Garston so uncongenial a resort.

Intent upon his own affairs, Major Storkley might have gazed for ever on the object of his scrutiny without exciting a similar return from the secretary, whose abstraction greatly aided the gallant officer's object; neither did the dejected visage of the new comer escape notice. To a common observer, or probably to ninety-nine persons out of one hundred, nothing would have appeared of sufficient import to excite attention, on seeing a gentleman enter a coffee-room, and, without calling for any refreshment, seat himself in a distant end of the apartment; but, as we have already stated, Major Storkley was not a man to allow even the most trivial occurrence to pass him by without comment, the more so if the cause of his solicitude could not by any possibility claim a legitimate right to his interference. This, then, was an excellent opportunity, a most desirable period, at which to exercise that generous self-forgetfulness in the examination of affairs unconnected with his own, and feeling convinced that the actions and movements of Frederick Garston must be wholly free from the need of his officiousness, so much the more determined was the major that an opportunity for interference should not be lost through any fault of his.

"How excessively dull you are!" remarked Colonel Handstop to the silent officer, on witnessing the uncommon circumstance of the reflection of a gleam of thought passing across his companion's countenance; "I never knew you so abstracted and absent."

"But very often *present* when not wanted," muttered Mr. Cooley to himself, and then added, in a louder key, "So he is, Handstop. What's the matter, eh? thinking of absent friends? Well, never mind. But talking of being absent reminds me of an acquaintance of mine, whom I knew many years ago at Tripatore"—

"Where on earth is Tripatore?" asked the colonel, interrupting the narrator.

"Not know Tripatore !!!" exclaimed the oriental, with a look of pity and astonishment; "not know Tripatore !!! wonderful. I conclude then, you never heard of Tritchinopoly, eh?"

"My ignorance does not extend quite so far as that,"

replied the Colonel, "I conclude most of us have heard of Tritchinopoly."

"Certainly," joined in the Major, for an instant withdrawing his searching gaze from Garston. "I recollect perfectly well, when I was a boy, an aunt of mine had a splendid Tritchinopoly."

"True; very splendid place, Tritchinopoly, indeed, sir, as you most justly remark," exclaimed the Honourable Mark, determined to tell his own story, rather than listen to Major Storkley's; "but as I was saying, Tripatore is about one hundred miles from Tritchinopoly, about the same distance from Shambupatam, half the number from Kellynelly-cotta, and not very far from Chinampetia."

"Oh, never mind that, Cooley," chimed in the Colonel, "I daresay both Major Storkley and myself know as much about its exact position as we care for, so on with your story."

"Well then, my friend, as I before said, lived at Tripatore. Ah, poor fellow, he died there soon after the period I am speaking of."

"Not at all surprised at that, in India," said the Major. "I perfectly recollect, when I was a boy, riding an ass."

"Thereby exemplifying an old adage;" whispered the Oriental; "but my friend was killed by a doctor."

"Nothing singular in that circumstance either," observed the Colonel.

"No, nothing very remarkable," replied Mr. Cooley, "further than the doctor in question had a singular cognomen; we used to call him Joe Manton."

"Why?" asked the inquisitive Major.

"Because he killed everything his attention was pointed at," was the reply, "and as he was particularly pointed in his attentions to my poor friend, why, of course, my poor friend died."

"Most of your Indian friends *did* die, by your account, Cooley," observed the gallant Colonel, and at this juncture a double portion of the Major's attention was put into play on observing Sir George Elms enter the room, and make direct for the place where the Secretary sat.

In those days there were two or three portions of the apartment singled out from the remaining portion of the room by small curtains, raised on low partitions, which in some degree ensconced the occupiers in comparative seclusion. It was in one of those most uncomfortable looking receptacles for hungry mortals that the secretary and his companion took up their abode, and by the tone in which they carried on their conversation, it would seem they were either careless of being overheard, or else unaware of the proximity of the other party.

With respect to Mr. Cooley and the Colonel, they were so

completely engrossed with their own conversation, as to heed little, or careless, if heeding, who might have entered the room. Not so the Major; for, convinced that some strange circumstance must have occurred, bringing into collision two persons so diametrically opposite in rank, fashion, and pursuits, he resolved to take advantage of his proximity, and accordingly listened with the utmost attention; neither did he listen in vain, for in a very brief period he was put in possession of the facts already detailed to the reader.

There was, however, one point which the Baronet deemed himself justified in explaining according to his peculiar mode, and for which Lord Dropmore would not have felt particularly grateful, had he been aware of Sir George's ready adoption of whatever deed or statement could further his own object; and as it was not *his* wish that the rupture between the secretary and his friend should widen, being particularly anxious for the reverse, he did not for an instant hesitate to apologize to Frederick Garston in the fullest terms for Lord Dropmore's conduct, thereby leaving the listening major to draw the inference, that Lord Blanchard's secretary had threatened to cane Lord Blanchard's son and heir, in return for which the young nobleman had sent the aggressor a most amicable message; a small piece of information which, as will hereafter appear, lost nothing by being placed in the fertile repository of Major Storkley's memory.

"And now, my dear sir," continued the baronet, "now that I have satisfactorily explained away, and finally settled, that disagreeable affair, I would fain crave the assistance of your advice and interference in a somewhat delicate business, and with which no earthly power should have tempted me to meddle, where I not confident that by so acting I shall advance the real interest of my friend Lord Dropmore. It may appear strange," he continued, "that at such a moment as this, when a misunderstanding between you has but just been explained away, that I should seek help from one who may naturally consider he has been unjustifiably and harshly treated; but, my dear sir, it is from the very knowledge of that circumstance that I apply to you rather than to many others whom the eye of the world might point out as being more calculated to meet my views."

"A fast and strongly rising regard for yourself induces me to throw open a way by which you must greatly tend to elevate yourself in Lord Blanchard's estimation, and, ultimately, in that of Lord Dropmore himself; in short, between ourselves, Dropmore is engaged to be married."

"To Miss Beecher?" eagerly exclaimed his companion, again thrown off his guard.

"Certainly not," answered the baronet. "Have I not already pointed out to you the utter indifference with which Lord Dropmore views his cousin, in a matrimonial view, and how improbable it is that he should form an alliance with a woman whom he scarcely ever condescends to honour with the infliction of half an hour of his society. No, no; the entanglement of which I speak is of a far more plebeian stamp, and one which, should it take place, must alienate from him the regard of his father for ever."

"In what respect is this marriage so objectionable?" asked Frederick, relieved beyond measure at Sir George's assurance of Emily Beecher not being the object coveted.

"The greatest objection in Lord Blanchard's eyes," replied the other—"want of birth." But on perceiving his auditor somewhat wince under the assertion, the Baronet rejoined, "Not that in the opinion of any rational person so absurd a charge should act as a bar to a man's happiness; but, when an individual, with strong prejudices like Lord Blanchard, asserts his unextinguishable hatred of all such misalliances, it is the duty of all who are in any way interested in the parties, to aid in any measure likely to avert so distressing a circumstance as a misunderstanding between the peer and his son."

"But who is the lady?" inquired Garston, gradually experiencing an interest in the communication. "What is her name?"

At that moment, so eager was the attentive Major to derive the benefit of the information about to be imparted, that the absurd attitude which he assumed in stretching forth his neck, as if to thrust his long ears as close to the mouth of the speaker as possible, presented so ludicrous an appearance as could not escape the notice of his two companions, whose attention having for a moment been attracted by an indistinct murmur of voices in another box, readily concluded what might be the honourable employment in which the gallant officer was engaged.

The interference, however, was particularly disagreeable to the major, inasmuch as he was necessarily compelled to forego the discovery as to what name the lady in question might rejoice in; and when the indifference of his companions again permitted him to return to his much practised employment, the conversation had considerably progressed.

"But in what way can I aid in this matter?" inquired Garston—"What power have I to break off the match which you state is almost immediately to take place?"

"Easily; no one can have better opportunities than yourself," answered the baronet. "Are you not with the marquis daily? And does he not place implicit confidence in your judgment?"

"But what has that to do with Lord Dropmore?" again urged Frederick, not feeling quite at ease as to the probable period during which he might be permitted to derive such advantages.

"Nothing to do with Dropmore, personally, I allow," replied the other; and much better that it should not; but don't you perceive how easily a word, or hint of yours might put the peer on the *qui vive*, and his suspicions once excited, Lord Blanchard will soon find measures for sifting the affair to an end, and by withdrawing Dropmore from the scene of his entanglement, eventually break off the engagement, to which you must feel as confident as I do, Lord Blanchard will never be brought to sanction. "But what say you to my proposition, Mr. Garston?" continued Sir George, on perceiving the secretary appeared buried in thought, and ill disposed to reply. "Come, rally, Garston, rally, and tell me if you do not think my plan a most admirable one?"

"Feasible enough," replied the person addressed—provided you can induce any one to execute it; but as regards myself, Sir George," resumed Frederick, "I trust you will never again propose so contemptible a part for my enacting as to imagine me capable of playing the spy upon Lord Dropmore, having for its probable result, mischiefs and misunderstandings innumerable."

"But, my dear sir," interrupted the other, "it is on purpose to avoid these very mischiefs and misunderstandings which you allude to, that I would have you so far prove yourself the friend of the family, as to inform the marquis of a circumstance —"

"With which I have no earthly right to interfere," added Garston, finishing the sentence. "No, no, Sir George, I do not conceive that it is my province to carry tales on such a subject to his lordship's ear; and though I may have, and indeed confess that I did commit myself in no trifling degree, this very evening at your house, still, it shall not be in any man's power to assert that Frederick Garston followed up the commission of a foolish act by an ungentlemanly piece of officious interference; therefore, if in that way alone is the information to be conveyed to Lord Blanchard, his lordship is little likely to receive it."

"But *I'll* let him know," mumbled the accommodating major, withdrawing his long neck from his listening attitude, somewhat in the fashion of a tortoise on finding its nose pricked with a sharp stick." *I'll* let the marquis know, and that moreover, before many hours have elapsed;" and filled with anticipations of the welcome reception which so important a piece of information must insure him on the morrow, the gallant officer withdrew his attention from the baronet and his companion, and proposed to his friends an adjournment to their respective domiciles.

The night was now fast waning into morn, and as the oriental and Colonel Handstop rose from their chairs, they for the first time discovered the close vicinity of the objects of Major Storkley's attention.

A smile of intelligence passed rapidly between the Honourable Mark and his associate on perceiving the two persons together whom, of all others, they would have thought least likely to commune in friendly converse. But both those gentlemen were well aware that the baronet was the last man to expose himself in secret communion with a person of Frederick Garston's calibre in society, without having most cogent and undeniable reasons for the infringement of his custom; and as, we have already seen, in the opinion of neither of the two gentlemen did Sir George hold a very elevated station, they hesitated not to ascribe his presence at "Long's" at that hour with the secretary, to the furtherance of some plan or plot with which the gay baronet was ever known to be scheming.

The appearance of the trio rising from the table, was a surprise far from agreeable to the baronet, although to Garston a matter of most perfect indifference; but having been detected in the fact of holding familiar converse with so ignoble a being as a secretary, he deemed it most prudent to carry the thing off with a nonchalance air which none knew better how to assume than himself.

A few formal greetings having been exchanged between the parties, the last two arrivals hurried to their homes: while for some distance, and for as long as his listeners would attend, the major enlivened his friends with a true and circumstantial account of what he had just gleaned; together with alterations, additions, illustrations, and comments, so as effectually to render the account which it was his pleasure to detail, as unlike the reality in every respect, as it was in the power of the most gifted of the race of story-mongers to invent.

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## CHAPTER XX.

"GHOST.—"Lend thy most serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold."

HAMLET.

IN accordance with Major Storkley's laudable intention, that most exemplary gentleman presented himself in Grosvenor

Square on the following morning ; and though but very slightly acquainted with Lord Blanchard, an officious person such as we have described the individual in question, would not consider that circumstance in the least degree calculated to offer an impediment to his purpose. Neither let it be supposed that the character thus drawn exceeds what may daily be encountered in reality, for among those who may deign to scan these pages, is there one who, from the class of society in which Fate may have placed him, cannot, amid the mass of his acquaintance, point out a duplicate of Major Storkley, one of those pompous, empty-headed bores who, pretending to a knowledge on all points, is wholly ignorant of each, and who, by everlastingly meddling with the affairs of others, is inevitably sure so to entangle and garble what might otherwise have admitted of easy explanation, into a complicated chaos of difficulties and falsehoods, leaving behind a long array of heart-burnings and misunderstandings which, had it not been for his officious and uncalled for interference, most probably never would have existed ?

On Major Storkley sending up his name, he was immediately admitted, the Marquis naturally surmizing that to some unusual occurrence, he was indebted for so early a visitation from so disagreeable a person ; but he was as much at a loss to conjecture what the nature of the business might prove, as was Kitson, the fat porter, whose rest was materially interfered with by the major's early application to the knocker.

After the usual salutations had been appropriately observed according to the custom of the age in which we live, and the walking budget of gossip had been in due form ensconced within the leathern boundaries of a comfortable arm-chair, the civilly attentive demeanour of the marquis spoke as plainly as looks could express, " May I inquire to what reason I am indebted for the honour of this visit ? " while the smirking, vulgar countenance of the other, ever and anon garnished with small black particles of snuff, from his blotting-paper depot, expressed a low, cunning importance, as though self-conscious of the magnitude of the discovery which he was about to unbosom.

" I have taken the liberty of intruding thus early, my Lord," commenced the major, " feeling sure of finding your lordship at home." And in return for another inclination of the head on the part of the peer, the officer re-produced his pungent mixture, a portion of which he unsuccessfully proffered to the marquis, who, apparently unwilling to prolong the interview by any speech of his, sat perfectly still, resolutely determined to abide the result.

" Finding my supposition correct," continued the intruder,

not much liking the stiff formality of his reception, "I have to congratulate myself on thus having an opportunity of putting your lordship in possession of a piece of information which I doubt not will prove highly acceptable; but, in the first instance, my lord, allow me to ascertain that no one is within hearing," and not waiting for a reply, Major Storkley rose softly, and without noise, from his chair, and passing round the room on tiptoe, peered into every aperture he could discover, and applied his ear to each orifice in the wainscotting, much after the fashion of old Grimaldi, in his favourite pantomime, when taking a survey of the neighbourhood prior to committing a theatrical theft.

During this extraordinary piece of performance, the peer looked on in mute astonishment, not fully comprehending whether his visitor was insane, or whether it was not possible that he meditated some act of violence against himself, neither of which suppositions being calculated to allay the agitation in the nerves of an old gentleman, placed the unfortunate marquis in a far from comfortable position.

Having perambulated the room, much to the satisfaction of one party, and to the amazement of the other, the gallant major resumed his seat, his countenance betraying what possibly he himself might have intended for a look of intelligence, but which far more resembled the foolish, imbecile stare of a monkey.

"Now, my lord marquis," continued Major Storkley, "now that I am convinced we are alone, I am ready for your gratification to make that disclosure, the knowledge of which must, I am convinced, afford you matter of great surprise," and elevating his eyebrows, the blotting paper was again brought into play, and having committed half its contents to the apertures of his nose, his lordship's informant proceeded.

"I think it highly probable," he remarked, "that your lordship is unaware that your secretary dined last night at Sir George Elms's;" and, having thus commenced the thread of his narrative, he paused to ascertain what effect so important a piece of information was likely to produce on his auditor; but in this he was considerably disappointed, Lord Blanchard coolly replying that he had already been put in possession of that circumstance by Mr. Garston himself.

"Indeed, my lord," observed the major, in a somewhat dejected tone, fearful that some person had preceded him in the development of his tale, "then possibly your lordship is acquainted with what took place on the occasion?"

"I am not aware that anything of importance did occur, Major Storkley," replied Lord Blanchard.

"So I thought," responded the other, brightening up; "such, my lord, was my impression; and seeing at once the very great necessity for your being made acquainted with the whole affair, I deemed it my duty thus to take the earliest opportunity of divulging it."

"Pray be more explicit, sir," interrupted Lord Blanchard, beginning to be somewhat interested, "pray come to the point, Major Storkley, and at once state what were the occurrences you allude to."

"Immediately, my lord," said the officer, "but I must first inform your lordship, that in the course of the evening Lord Dropmore was added to the party, when, in consequence of some remark on one side or the other, your secretary, Mr. Garston, rose, and coupling the name of a lady in your family with terms most reprehensible and unjust, shouted out the name in a very contemptuous manner."

"Who! what!" hastily exclaimed Lord Blanchard, "my secretary, sir, Mr. Garston, did what, sir?"

"Made use of Miss Beecher's name in the most unprovoked and unjustifiable manner," was the answer.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the astonished nobleman, "utterly impossible, sir; you must be mistaken."

"I wish I could persuade myself that such was the case," observed the major, with an elongated visage of concern, "but alas, my lord, my authority is too authentic to be doubted."

"Nevertheless, sir," observed the marquis, "I am wholly at a loss to comprehend your story, for I should have imagined Mr. Garston the least likely person in the universe to have committed so flagrant an act of ingratitude and impropriety—but pray proceed, sir, proceed."

"Alas, my lord," replied the officious mischief maker, "how little can we fathom the real sentiments of those from whose outward actions nothing but what is good and virtuous might be expected: but to return. No sooner had Mr. Garston performed this piece of audacity, than of course your lordship's son interfered in the matter, and naturally enough loudly expatiated on the enormity of the secretary's conduct; on which the low-born adventurer, half mad with wine and passion, seized a whip which was lying on an adjacent table, and without the slightest provocation struck his lordship with all the force he could throw into his plebeian arm."

"Good heavens! Major Storkley," inquired the now irritated nobleman; "are you confident of the truth and correctness of what you are telling me?"

"Perfectly, my lord," replied the other, delighted at the sensation which a detail of his story was producing—"perfectly, I

assure you; but the most extraordinary part yet remains to be recounted."

"And what might *that* be, asked the other.

"Why, simply this: that after what had occurred, I myself heard Sir George Elms offer the most humble apology possible to Mr. Garston, on behalf of Lord Dropmore.

"You mean an apology *to* Lord Dropmore, exclaimed the marquis.

"Quite the reverse, my lord," added the major, "I mean that Sir George Elms went to "Long's" evidently by appointment; and having there met Mr. Garston, I heard the apology from your son offered and accepted."

"This certainly is the most singular tale of yours, Major Storkley," remarked the marquis, now thoroughly perplexed—"nor can I in the least understand it."

"Very likely not, my lord," replied the other; "and to own the truth, I was considerably puzzled myself: but all this is nothing to what I discovered afterwards."

"In the name of heaven, then, what was it?" asked Lord Blanchard, eagerly—"what could be worse than what you have already stated?" but instead of affording an immediate reply, the individual addressed, again rose from his seat, and for a second time commenced his rounds, looking minutely into each corner of the apartment, and having opened each door, and by personal inspection convinced himself that no one was near likely to profit by the intelligence about to be divulged, the major returned to his chair, which having drawn as close as possible to that of the marquis, and sitting on the very edge of the seat,—his legs neatly tucked inwards—he stretched forth his crane-like neck, and placing his mouth close to the ear of his auditor, he whispered,

"Is your lordship aware that Lord Dropmore is married?"

Had the worthy officer applied a lighted match to one of his own military engines, crammed with the most destructive species of combustible matter, and exploded the same directly under the nose of the peer, a greater effect could not have been produced at the moment; for suddenly springing from his chair, in the hurry of the moment he nearly upset the communicative informer who, gazing in wonder at the effect which his information produced, appeared as much horrified at the work of his own hands, as was Frankenstein on infusing life into the monster.

As soon as the marquis found utterance for words, he eagerly, and with much excitement demanded the lady's name; but as, unfortunately, that was a point on which the major was himself ignorant, and not deeming it advisable to have recourse to a

fictitious appellation, his auditor remained unenlightened ; but, to render the disappointment somewhat less severe, Major Storkley proceeded to inform the enraged parent, that although he could not at that moment call to mind either the Christian or surname of the lady, yet he was fully prepared to prove that, both by birth, education, habit, and manners, the individual was so much Lord Dropmore's inferior, that on the union being made public, derision and contempt must necessarily be heaped on the family of the husband.

This consolatory piece of news having been delivered by the one and digested by the other, the marquis's countenance betrayed such unequivocal symptoms of anger and surprise, that, valiant as the major might be when relating his tales of scandal at a tea-party, he would willingly have sacrificed the most piquant piece of mischief-making in his budget, to have found himself safe and sound on the other side of the street door ; and so fiercely did the old nobleman scowl on his visitor, that it seemed doubtful whether the incensed parent might not be tempted to lavish his displeasure on the informer, during the absence of the principal delinquent.

If such *had* been the marquis's purpose, Major Storkley did not wait to see it put in execution, for feeling convinced that by his uncalled-for interference, he had ruined the secretary—made a wide, and probably never to be explained away misunderstanding between the father and son, and judging from all appearances that he had brought about something approaching to a fit of apoplexy in the peer, the gallant officer seized his hat, and without further ceremony, made his way towards the door, accompanied in his departure with an exclamation from Lord Blanchard's lips which most indisputably did not sound in any degree approximating to a blessing.

No sooner had Major Storkley quitted the house, than having violently pulled the bell, Lord Blanchard inquired whether Mr. Garston was at home, and being answered in the affirmative, he desired that he might be instantly sent for.

With a feeling of deep dejection, and that inexplicable presentiment of impending evil, which, without knowing wherefore, will sometimes cling to us in spite of all our efforts to shake it off, Frederick proceeded to obey the summons ; and, conscious of the folly of which on the preceding night he had been guilty, he laid his hand upon the lock of Lord Blanchard's library door with a full conviction that the subject he most dreaded was about to be discussed, and suspense was speedily converted into certainty when his gaze fell on the agitated countenance of his patron.

“I have sent for you, Mr. Garston,” said Lord Blanchard, in

a voice struggling between emotion and rage: "I have sent for you, sir, in consequence of a most extraordinary tale which has just been related to me, and in which you are named as the principal performer—a tale so utterly incomprehensible, that I cannot credit its assertion: however, I have sent for you, in order that you may in person refute the calumny," and pausing in his speech, he fixed his steady gaze on Frederick's features.

"It would be worse than folly, my lord," replied Garston, "were I to pretend ignorance on the subject to which your lordship has just alluded; and it was my intention to have laid a detail of the whole of last night's occurrences before your lordship this morning, but I perceive Lord Dropmore has fore-stalled my purpose."

"Lord Dropmore, sir," replied the marquis, rapidly, and with much vehemence—"Lord Dropmore, sir, I have neither seen nor heard from this day—neither does it become you, after having grossly insulted the name of a lady in my family, and likewise daring to attack my son, to come here uttering complaints against him, which are wholly without foundation."

"I merely conjectured it was probable your lordship might have seen Lord Dropmore this morning; but I had hoped that after the apology which passed, no further notice would have been taken of the disagreeable affair."

"Disagreeable affair, truly, Mr. Garston," answered the marquis, with asperity, "and somewhat entitled to a stronger expression, I should say. But, sir, answer me these questions:—did you, or did you not, couple my niece's name with a toast which you thought proper to drink at Sir George Elms's table last evening? Did you or did you not insult Lord Dropmore on that occasion? And did not Sir George Elms bring you an apology from my son?—Now, sir, I request plain and definitive answers to these questions; and on your reply my fixed determination shall be taken and put in practice forthwith."

Thus called on, what could Garston utter? The story of the toast having been drunk, was but too true; as were indeed both the remaining accusations; but had Frederick Garston conceived it possible that an account of the affair had been detailed to the marquis through so tortuous and magnified a medium as our readers have perceived to have been the case, he would have endeavoured to disabuse his patron of the exaggerated view he had received of the occurrence.

That the account received—by whomsoever furnished—was not calculated to befriend the secretary, Lord Blanchard's irritated state sufficiently showed; yet Garston determined to make one effort more, ere he forfeited the good opinion of his patron for ever.

"Although, my lord," he commenced; "although I acknowledge to a certain degree the correctness of what you have alleged, yet allow me to assure you that the facts, as they really occurred, do not admit of so heinous a construction as you seem to imagine; and moreover —"

"No doubt, no doubt, sir," testily interrupted the other; "not in your estimation, I dare say; but, sir, surely you will allow me to be the best judge of what construction to put on any insult offered to my family."

"Insult, my lord?" replied Garston: "never, on my word, did I meditate the commission of such an act."

"Then wherefore did you put it in practice, sir?" inquired the marquis. "Though possibly you may allege that using Miss Beecher's name in the manner you did was no insult, possibly I may be told that your conduct to my son was not an insult?—neither, I presume, do you so term the circumstance of affirming that Lord Dropmore condescended to send you an apology, whereas it was from yourself that the most abject reparation should have proceeded: but, sir, I will summon Lord Dropmore, and before me he shall declare that he never so far committed himself, or he shall cease to be countenanced by me as long as I exist!" and thus saying, Lord Blanchard again rang the bell; and Lord Dropmore, chancing to be at home, was speedily ushered into his father's presence.

"Dropmore," began the peer, "I have been informed that during last evening you received a gross insult from Mr. Garston; and, singular to say, that so far from in any way resenting his impertinence, you actually sent him an apology.—Is that correct, Mr. Garston?" added the peer, turning to our hero.

"In so far, my lord," replied Garston, reluctantly, "that I fully acknowledge that my conduct was not what, in a more temperate mood, I should have wished it; but considering what had previously occurred, I could not but view the apology which Lord Dropmore offered as highly complimentary to myself, and certainly it would not have been from my lips that mention would ever have been made of the matter."

"What apology?" exclaimed Lord Dropmore.

"The apology which your lordship sent me last evening by Sir George Elms," replied the other.

"I send an apology by Sir George Elms?" exclaimed the young nobleman, "never: so far from it, I told Sir George, most distinctly, that on no account whatever would I so demean myself; but at the same time I acknowledge that I commissioned him to use what means he might please, in order to hush up the matter, solely from my dislike to being mixed up in any

dispute with a person so infinitely beneath me :" and under the impression that to Frederick Garston was he indebted for the knowledge of the transaction having reached his father, he turned on his heel, and with a stare of sovereign contempt was about to leave the room, when Garston stopped him.

" Am I then to understand," he exclaimed, " that the apology which was brought me by Sir George Elms, as purporting to have been sent by your lordship, was a fictitious message ? "

" I don't believe any apology whatever was given," sharply replied Lord Dropmore.

" But, my lord, I assert that such *was* the case," angrily retorted the secretary.

" Of that I shall be better able to judge when I have seen Sir George," was the reply.

" Do you mean, then, to doubt my word, Lord Dropmore ? " said Garston.

" On that subject I shall judge for myself," answered the other; and without deigning to bestow further notice on his father's dependant, the haughty young nobleman instantly quitted the apartment.

" Mr. Garston," said the marquis,—his son having closed the door,—" you cannot feel surprised, after such conduct as you have been guilty of, to learn how impossible it is you should longer remain in my family : and indignant as I am at the discovery of your unjustifiable conduct, my displeasure is nothing to the regret I feel, at finding how utterly mistaken I have been in your character, and how totally unworthy you are of my protection. The esteem which I once felt for you, and which, I acknowledge, I was anxious to cultivate, has now passed away. I have been grossly deceived ; and in the hope of injuring the reputation of Lord Dropmore, you have actually stooped to utter a falsehood which he has in person disproved. I shall not here expatiate on the return which I assuredly considered I had a right to expect for whatever benefit you may have received at my hands, neither shall I further prolong this interview than to repeat, that from this instant you cease all communion with myself and my family ; and trusting that experience will improve your disposition and your heart, I wish you good day :" and pointing to the door with one hand, the marquis pulled the bell violently with the other.

At that moment the bosom of poor Garston rose nearly to suffocation : to quit a house which, for so long, he had considered as his home, to be thrust out of a family in disgrace, where he had been treated with marked deference and respect, was enough to unman the stoutest heart : but to feel that he was suffering undeservedly, and yet too proud to insist on a

further explanation, which might possibly be considered as a mean attempt at reinstatement, was a step which his pride spurned. Yet, to leave the house without one word in reply, was impossible ; so, striving to allay the emotion which partly checked his utterance, and turning towards his benefactor—

“ My lord,” he said, “ after what you have just uttered, it were as impossible as it would be painful, for me to remain an inmate of your lordship’s family. That you should have conceived so erroneous an impression of my conduct, cannot fail to inflict deep and lasting regret on my mind ; but, knowing it to be undeserved, I look forward with confidence to a period when, having discovered the injustice of your conduct, you may regret, though possibly without avail, your having treated me with a harshness which I certainly do not merit. For your manifold kindnesses to myself, believe me, I shall feel ever grateful ; and though I now quit your lordship’s house for ever, I pardon the gross imposition which has been practised, confident that some person has attempted, and too successfully, to bias your mind against one who has ever regarded your lordship with the most unfeigned and respectful veneration ; and now, my lord, for the last time, farewell.” And, vainly struggling to conceal his feelings, our hero rushed towards the door, and in an instant quitted the apartment.

“ Mr. Garston has quitted the house, my lord, without taking any of his property with him,” observed Lord Blanchard’s confidential servant, who had remained in the room during the latter part of the interview. “ Had I not better take an inventory of them, in case of any future inquiries ? ”

“ Do so,” replied the marquis ; and in obedience to his wishes, the servant proceeded on his way, and in a short time returned, carrying in his arms the desk which we have had occasion to mention more than once.

“ I have attended to your lordship’s commands,” observed the valet, on re-entering the library, “ but finding this desk lying open, and the key in it, and not knowing what it might contain, I thought it would be adviseable to bring it to your lordship, before I fastened it.”

“ You did perfectly right,” was the reply, “ so now lock the desk, and I will place the key in some secure place.”

The servant did as directed ; and having laid the key before the marquis, was about to retire, when his attention was recalled by a loud and sudden exclamation from the peer.

“ In the name of heaven,” exclaimed the marquis, much excited, “ in heaven’s name, where got you that key ? ”

“ It is the key of Mr. Garston’s desk, my lord,” replied the valet, with a look of astonishment.





"Mr. Garston's desk!" echoed the marquis, "Call him!—run quick: stop him—for mercy's sake, stop him!—quick, quick," and, in obedience to his commands, servants rushed forth, and traversed all the adjacent streets, but in vain; for to the often-asked question, whether they had discovered the secretary? the undeviating answer was "Mr. Garston, my lord, cannot be found."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

LYSANDER.—"The course of true love never did run smooth."  
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

BUT a few minutes previous to the departure of Frederick Garston, Lord Blanchard had worked himself into the belief that he was the most injured dupe in existence, and his secretary was, without exception, the most plausible, though ungrateful, wretch breathing, and on nothing was he more determined than to rid his house of so objectionable and unprincipled an inmate; and yet, now, when only a few seconds had elapsed, most willingly would the marquis have sacrificed any inconvenience and loss to regain him whom he had but just rudely and voluntarily cast from his door; and bitterly did he then regret the absence of that habitual caution and self-command which generally characterized his actions.

Yet wherefore arose this sudden and opposite change in his feelings towards our hero? And why, instantly succeeding the departure of Frederick from the house, would the perplexed peer, at any personal sacrifice, have recalled him?

Messengers were despatched to the abode of Dr. Glitzom with all speed, but they eventually retraced their steps, having proved their mission fruitless. Nothing could they discover regarding the absent secretary; no one had beheld him since quitting Grosvenor Square, and in what direction to continue the search it was impossible to surmise.

Again and again did the marquis gaze on the small golden key placed before him, bringing, many and various, the scenes long since enacted and passed away, to the remembrance of Lord Blanchard, as vividly as though they had been the occurrences of yesterday.

Strong was the temptation to apply the key to the small desk, and thereby, as he conjectured, solve at once the doubts

which at that moment so agitated and distressed him ; but a high sense of honor effectually prevented him having recourse to so mean an alternative, as clandestinely to examine the private papers of an individual who was not near to resent the affront.

Mentally, Lord Blanchard determined in no way to relax his endeavours to obtain at least one more interview with Garston ; and for that purpose he adopted every plan which ingenuity could prompt, or a liberal distribution of money could purchase. These preliminaries effected, the marquis, securing the talismanic key within his private *escritoire*, sought the boudoir of his niece, who as yet remained unconscious of the dismissal of the secretary.

But a very few days had yet to pass away when it had been arranged the family was to leave town ; and on the morning of which we treat, while occupied in some feminine employment, Emily Beecher's thoughts were rapidly straying back towards the remembrance of the many happy hours which during the last few months had so swiftly glided by. One previous season she had already passed in London ; yet, although its predecessor was marked by as many gorgeous festivals, and splendid fetes, as that which had but just flown, and although the first appearance in the world adds that greatest charm of all, novelty, to delight the *debutante*, still the reminiscences of the lady dwelt more upon the joyous hours which had just fled, than upon the galaxy of beauty and amusement which had ushered in her first entrance on the world.

And wherefore was it so ? Was it because the various epochs of the former season were unmarked by the presence of her cousin, whilst nearly every late engagement was performed in conjunction with himself ? Far from it. At the commencement of the season, it is true, Emily had looked forward to the return of Lord Dropmore from abroad with feelings of unmixed happiness, not only from the anticipated pleasure of again beholding the accustomed playmate of her earlier years, but likewise from a consciousness of the delight which his presence could not fail to heap upon his father ; neither will we deny that the almost idolatrous devotion which, in the first instance, the young nobleman lavished upon her, failed to create an impression in his favour, which possibly, a continuance of regard on his side, might eventually have ripened into a sentiment of a more tender nature. But that such was not destined to occur we have already shown. And as Lord Dropmore's attentions gradually, though not imperceptibly, continued to decline, so, without any painful effort on her part, Emily Beecher ceased to take any interest in him, further than the ties of consanguinity might warrant.

Had Lord Dropmore been left to the better promptings of his own heart, instead of allowing himself to act as an instrument in the hands of others, it is probable that the sweetness of his cousin's disposition, and the extreme beauty of her person, might have so wrought upon his nature that, instead of voluntarily casting from him a pearl of such inestimable value, he would have enfolded the bright and precious gem in his bosom, and there guarded and cherished its pure brilliancy through life. But, alas, that time had now passed by, and those sentiments which Lord Dropmore *might* have awakened in his own behalf, had been fanned into a flame within the bosom of his cousin; but the steady light which it created glowed not in his favour, but for another, and that other, the discarded, disgraced, and deserted Frederick Garston.

It were hard to say whether Emily was herself aware of the true nature of her sentiments towards our hero, and it is more than probable that the supposition of her having thrown away the best feelings of her young heart in favour of the unknown dependant, never for an instant occurred to her imagination. Accustomed as she, daily, nay almost hourly, had been to his society, it was most unlikely that the deep, though most respectful homage which he ever paid to the lovely being so constantly before him, could have passed unnoticed by the other; and that other a woman so formed to love, and to cherish all the finest feelings of our better nature, as Emily Beecher.

That Frederick Garston was the adopted companion of her uncle, the chosen society for his evenings, was sufficient for the warm-hearted girl; without waiting to ponder on the many worldly disadvantages under which her new acquaintance laboured. To Emily it little mattered, at that time, from whence came the companion whose conversation and presence was rapidly assuming an interest in her eyes. The beautiful niece of Lord Blanchard found in the humble secretary a well-informed, gentlemanly, and agreeable associate; and at length, when any circumstance interfered with their accustomed evening's amusement, the cause of such interruption was regarded as an unwelcome intrusion.

Had any of Lord Blanchard's friends hinted to his lordship the possibility of the acquaintance ripening into a less platonic feeling, the peer would have scouted the idea as something too absurdly ridiculous to rivet his attention for a second; and having, according to his own intentions, decided that Emily Beecher should eventually become Lady Dropmore, so preposterous a supposition as that any arrangement might be effected calculated to interfere with the disposal of the lady's hand, otherwise than according to his pleasure, bore not the shadow of possibility.

Nevertheless it was so ; and long ere Emily was in possession of the secret, her heart had passed away into the keeping of her new friend ; and when once a young lady deems it necessary to dispose of so troublesome a companion, it matters little whether the object whereon it be lavished possess what less romantic persons consider as the necessary qualifications ; and though pride, and various other powerful auxiliaries, be brought into opposition to the bent of her inclination, there is but small fear of the property being regained, where it has originally been bestowed with the full concurrence of the fair donor herself.

In the instance before us, enough has been shown to convince the reader that, as regarded Emily, her young affections had, as it were, been gradually sapped, until, even without her knowledge, the citadel was silently entered ; and the period had now arrived for opening her conviction to the reality that from henceforth the power of bestowing her affections rested not at her disposal.

Yet not a word had been uttered, not a hint conveyed, by the young secretary, which could have borne any further construction than the marquis himself must have sanctioned, had every syllable that passed between them been repeated for his edification. Nevertheless, it has been affirmed, and we conclude truly, since such ready credence is given to the assertion, that it needs not words to convey the meaning, when a reciprocity of tastes and feelings acts as the prelude to what young ladies term "an entanglement of hearts." Not that we presume to vouch so far on our own knowledge ; we merely repeat what some of the fairest of the creation have affirmed, and to doubt the accuracy of their knowledge on that point, we have neither power nor ability ; nor yet, even possessing both, should we find ourselves possessed of inclination.

What Frederick Garston's ideas as to the prospect of his ever reaching that consummation of happiness—a union with Emily—might have been, must be developed hereafter, but at present we must return to our fair friend, and having admitted our readers into the secret which is ever esteemed of the highest importance with young ladies, we will now accompany the marquis in his interview with his niece.

As we stated some brief period since, Emily Beecher was busily occupied in some most elaborate employment, when her uncle requested admittance to her *boudoir* ; a demand sued for more in courtesy than otherwise, since the peer was well aware with what real pleasure his niece ever received those visits, which not unfrequently ended in the party being increased to a *trio*.

"Emily, my dear," commenced Lord Blanchard, "I am

sorry to feel obliged to trouble you with any disagreeable information, but considering all that has lately occurred in this family, I deem it but right to put you in possession of the whole circumstances of the case ;" and seating himself as though exhausted by his exertions, his lordship assumed an aspect sufficiently grave to have done honour to the most lugubrious tale that could be invented.

" My dear uncle," exclaimed Emily, not a little alarmed at the unusual state of agitation under which the marquis evidently laboured, " what has occurred ? What can have happened to distress you so palpably ?

" Nothing out of the common way, Emily," replied the nobleman : " at least nothing which, in the present day, should be accounted extraordinary ; merely another proof of the ingratitude of the world, Emily ; nothing worse than that—and yet—"

" Nay, nay, my dear uncle," replied the beautiful girl, laughing, anxious to draw his attention from a, too evidently, painful contemplation, and yet, with the true feeling of a woman, desirous of ascertaining to what cause might be attributed so sudden and great a change, both in his tone and countenance ; " what can possibly have happened, my dear uncle," she continued, " to have caused you so much evident annoyance ?"

" My dearest Emily," replied the marquis, gently drawing the slight form of his niece to his bosom, and imprinting a kiss on her clear forehead, " my dearest girl, you little know, and God grant you never may become acquainted with the deep feeling of disappointment which ever must follow the discovery that one, whom you had loved and trusted as your son, should eventually be proved utterly unworthy of such confidence."

" To what and to whom do you allude, my dear uncle ?" eagerly inquired Emily, somewhat alarmed, not only by the words, but as much by the manner of the marquis. " Of whom, uncle, do you speak ?"

" Of my secretary, or rather of him who was my secretary, Frederick Garston," replied Lord Blanchard.

" Frederick Garston ;" gasped the fair girl by his side, " who has anything to offer against his conduct ?" when, as if ashamed of the vehemence with which she had commenced his defence, even without knowing the cause of complaint alleged against him, poor Emily, blushing to her very temples, held down her head in silence, as much perhaps to conceal the roseate hue which flushed her features, as to hide the unbidden tear which, in spite of her utmost endeavour, trembled on the sable fringe of her dark eye-lashes.

In reply to his niece's impassioned defence of his late secre-

tary, Lord Blanchard entered into a detail of the circumstances, laying great stress upon that portion of his supposed delinquency where, out of sheer malice and dislike, he had endeavoured to affix a stigma to Lord Dropmore's character, and that, too, by the invention of a falsehood.

In refutation of such accusations what could an inexperienced girl offer? And although, in her own mind, she encountered no difficulty in forming excuses innumerable for the alleged misdeed, it was impossible that she could give utterance to her feelings; the more so, as she had nothing to advance in support of Frederick Garston, save the strong confidence which all innocent minds cherish in behalf of the conduct of the accused.

Yet, although Emily Beecher remained silent, it was with no small astonishment Lord Blanchard beheld the indignant flush which overspread her expressive features when listening to the recital of his secretary's misconduct, and greatly was the peer at a loss to account for an ebullition of feeling such as he had never previously experienced from that quarter.

Not only was the period at hand which was destined to draw the veil from the eyes of the lady, and at last disclose the true state of her feelings as regarded the disgraced unknown; but a discovery very nearly assimilating to an equal *expose*, was in a fair way of being laid bare to the unsuspecting marquis, for it was impossible he could behold such an excess of feeling manifested on the occasion, without drawing conclusions in no way flattering to his pride, nor, in his opinion, calculated to elevate his niece in the estimation of the world.

Whatever might have formed the cogitations of Lord Blanchard, no word on that topic passed his lips, and it is more than probable the strange emotions which the sight of the small gold key had so lately produced, might have tended to shake the determination of the peer, as to adopting any sudden or severe measure.

The impression, however, which the discovery of that small instrument had effected, he did not consider necessary to divulge, and the feelings to which it had given rise were as yet complicated and difficult to define. The marquis wisely judged it would be adviseable, in the first instance, to commune with his own thoughts, prior to giving birth to expectations which, in all human probability, would be found to have their origin in misconstruction and mistake. Thus determined, and affectionately saluting Emily, he hastily took his leave, and hurrying to his library, forbade the approach of any interruption, without his express sanction.

But in what way did Emily Beecher receive the tidings, that he who, for so many months, had been the constant companion

of her hours, was now banished from her presence, driven in disgrace from her uncle's mansion, and destined never to re-appear in her presence? Then it was that the true cause of the past happiness of the foregoing months rose to her view; and in an instant the thin screen was drawn aside, and the heart of Emily Beecher tacitly confessed, while it audibly throbbed, that the welfare of Frederick Garston was more to her than was all the world beside.

As true chroniclers of the events which we are called on to detail, we cannot avoid surmising, that had the worthy marquis evinced a little more discrimination and prudence, the probability of such an event happening would have been considerably diminished; but Lord Blanchard's is not the only instance, where parents, after forcing their children, or heedlessly allowing them to stray towards the very verge of a precipice, are loud in their denunciations and regrets, on finding the somewhat too severe trial frequently terminating in the most natural, but to them most disagreeable manner imaginable.

So chanced it with poor Emily. Possessed of a naturally kind and susceptible heart, her interest in the welfare of her uncle's deliverer was speedily excited; and when, by after association, the finer and more gentle traits of Frederick Garston's character imperceptibly crept into notice, can it be wondered that the recollection of difference in rank and station, should have been cast aside—and that, heeding nothing beyond the happiness of the moment, hopes and joyous anticipations of the future were nourished, which common sense, had she been consulted, must have found herself compelled to destroy?

In the present instance, what could Emily do to turn away the wrath from one whom her pure heart, judging from its own innocence, pronounced guiltless? Alas! in how few situations of life can a woman, albeit gifted with the greatest ability, and backed with the courage to act—in how few instances will the customs and usages of society permit any active part to be taken by the fairer portion of creation, whose lot appears to be laid down for suffering, in silence and tears! And such was the case with Emily,—delicacy, her youth and sex, alike forbade all interference on her part, in a matter which had already been decided on by her indulgent uncle; and, as the young lady was not one of those who pour into the greedy ears of their menials, each cherished secret of their bosoms, our fair friend had nowhere to turn for sympathy and advice. So, like Washington Irving's beautiful description of the dove, "who will close its wings to its side, and cover and conceal the arrow that is preying on its vitals, so is it the nature of woman, to hide from the world the pangs of wounded affection." In accordance with this

practice, the fair Emily wisely bethought her, that the least ready way to obtain her object, would be by seclusion and despondency in her own chamber; therefore, hastily throwing off at least the semblance of grief, she bedecked her lovely face in smiles, and resolved to fathom the matter. She appeared to have dismissed the remembrance of the secretary's existence from her mind; but she was nevertheless determined to carry her own projects into execution.

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### A GREEK CHAUNT.

On a rude tablet, not far from Athens, the following lines may perhaps still appear in the original language, and if not, this humble translation will serve to perpetuate the pathetic tale which gave rise to them.

“ By the grave of my child I planted a rose,  
And it flourished for many a day  
Where, tranquil and bright, now yon rivulet flows,  
Which rudely has washed it away !

“ Still, fondly I trace through the glittering stream  
The mound all enveloped by moss ;  
As fresh as each tear of affliction would seem,  
That memory sheds for my loss.

“ ’Twas thus that fair Hellen’s beautiful form  
Once bloomed in the neighbouring vale,  
Till pestilence came like a hideous storm,  
And it bowed to the withering gale.

“ But, deep in my bosom engraven will be  
Each line of her heavenly face,  
Which the waters of time that pass over me,  
Alas ! shall but slowly efface.”

S.

## LITTLE MARY BROWN.

BY MISS HANNAH CLAY.

## CHAPTER VI.—THE TASK.\*

WE will not follow the quick glancings of Elizabeth's scissors amid the folds of the delicate muslin ; the no less rapid movements of Letty's needle ; or little Mary's alternated nervous and hopeful exclamations, as she sat sewing what we think we have heard denominated the skirt, while the others, dressmakers of longer experience, took the more complicated parts of the robe. We will not describe how the dress was fitted on to her neat little figure in a twinkling ; and that done, how nimbly the three pairs of hands glided over the transparent fabric, the workwomen only interrupting themselves to answer Charles's reiterated inquiries at the door as to their progress. Mr. Brown, too, made his appearance after dinner, and on the strength of his paternity forced his way into the room, slyly followed by Charles, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the prim Letty, who, long as she had lived in the family, had never beheld such impudence before, she said.

When gentlemen find themselves in propinquity to a lady's work-basket—I have heard my wife make the remark a hundred times—what plagues do they become ! How clumsily do they handle the work, besides cutting up anything that comes readiest to hand with the scissors, and tangling all the skeins of silk or wool. Charles and his uncle did not form exceptions to the rule. They were even more than usually troublesome in their movements, and fidgetted about until they disturbed the whole economy of the work-tables. The entreaties of the girls that they would depart became urgent, and at length Mr. Brown was forcibly ejected ; but in an unfortunate moment Charles caught sight of Elizabeth's ball dress, and he could not be prevailed on to stir until he had pronounced upon its merits. Her wreath of lilies particularly drew forth his approbation, and apparently inspired him with some bright idea ; for having examined the whole apparatus, as he called it, of Elizabeth's *toilette*, from the wreath to the white satin slipper, he left the room with as much abruptness as before he had testified disinclination to move. A few minutes afterwards they heard the hall-door close ; and looking out, they saw him running down the lane

\* Continued from page 36, vol. lvii.

with so much speed, that he was soon out of sight. They hazarded a conjecture or two as to the reason of this sudden freak, and then applied themselves to their work with renewed perseverance, and when the clock struck seven, were surprised and rejoiced to find how nearly these last two hours of undisturbed industry had brought their labours to a close.

"Now then," exclaimed Elizabeth, as she put in the finishing stitches, "now for the appurtenances. Mary, dear, have you a pretty *berthe*?"

"I have this one of Honiton lace," answered Mary, "but I don't think it a becoming shape. I bought a new one with my dress: I wish they had arrived."

"Never mind, let me look at it. See, it only wants pinching in a little here, and then it will sit splendidly. What slippers do you intend to wear? Oh! those. Well, I will mend them up for you, and I see you have white kid gloves ready trimmed, and a satin sash. We shall manage to make you look respectable, love, without your purchases. That beautiful pearl necklace will be your only ornament, of course. I declare you will be quite a fairy. See! there are your slippers. Now let us begin to dress."

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#### CHAPTER VII.—THE TOILET.

IT was past eight o'clock before a hasty clasp of the garden gate, and a step on the paved walk beneath Mary's window, announced the return of Charles. Elizabeth peeped, half dressed as she was, from the casement.

"There is your cousin, at last. Where can he have been all this time, and what is that box which he carries in his hand?"

Mary went to the window to look, but he had already entered the house, and was soon heard ascending the stairs.

"Young ladies," cried he, tapping at the door, "admit me for one moment, or come to speak with me here."

"Indeed, young gentleman, we can neither do one nor the other," answered Elizabeth, "for Mary is under the hands of her maid, and I am far from being dressed."

"Oh! well, never mind, for I ought to be looking after my own toilet. It is twenty minutes past eight already. I will wait until we meet in the drawing-room."

"A much better plan," again answered Elizabeth, and

Charles hastened off to make the necessary preparations. Half an hour later the little party assembled downstairs, and many were the congratulations which greeted Mary on her entrance. No drapery could fall more gracefully than did the soft muslin about her rounded form ; no hair could wave more charmingly than did her silken curls ; and thus she stood, in her simple loveliness, beneath the admiring gaze of her father and cousin. Elizabeth's dress was more elaborate, but was equally becoming to her darker and maturer charms. The wreath of lilies which had so delighted our hero confined her jetty tresses, and the delicate amber of her dress set off to advantage her brilliant complexion and eyes.

Charles gently took Mary's hand. "Nothing can be more tasteful than your attire, my dear little cousin," said he ; "and yet, methinks, a flower would not lessen the beauty of these flowing tresses." And, with more expertness than one would have given him credit for, the young man fastened a moss-rose of peculiar beauty amid her shining hair, and placing in her hand a bouquet of the choicest flowers, playfully whispered, "Will you accept these also, little cousin ?"

Mary blushed, and looked at her father, who smiled indulgently upon his darling. "Take them, Molly, take them," said the open-hearted old gentleman ; "I dare say Charley here thinks he has a right to decorate you, for the sake of old times, when you used to play together." So Mary was content to accept the flowers, and Charles felt himself amply rewarded for all the trouble he had taken to procure them.

"Now," said he, turning to Elizabeth, "I shall be perfectly happy if Miss Craven will honour me by accepting a bouquet also."

"Certainly, with many thanks," replied Elizabeth ; "but pray may I ask Mr. Davidson where he procured all these beautiful flowers ?"

"Oh, to be sure ; but that is a long tale. However, you shall hear part of it during our ride."

At this moment, the vehicle that was to convey them to the scene of festivity being announced, the ladies hastily caught up their gloves, and were handed into it by the gentlemen.

"Now, Mr. Davidson," resumed Elizabeth, as soon as they were rolling along, "I claim your promise."

"What promise ?" exclaimed Charles, starting. He had for several moments been absorbed in contemplating Mary's features, unobserved by the fair girl herself, who was occupied in drawing on a pair of somewhat tight gloves. He turned to the lively inquirer ; "What promise ?" asked he, again, for Elizabeth had, in her turn, become intent on scrutinizing him.

"About the flowers, you know. You promised to tell me where you got them."

"I went to Littleborough for them."

"Did you take papa's cob?" asked Mary, archly.

"How can you think of such a thing, Mary?" said her father. "You know my poor Grizzle cannot bear more than one journey a day, and if he had taken her he would not have been home in time to go with us. How did you manage, Charles?"

"My dear uncle, you know there is a very comfortable inn at the end of the village."

"Aye, to be sure, Jack Linton's. Well, what then?"

"Well, I got the landlord, Jack Linton, as you call him, to lend me his mare; and a capital good one she proved, and a fast goer, so that I had plenty of time to look about me in Littleborough; and there I found a first-rate florist's, and that, Miss Craven, is all the mystery."

"Thank you for explaining it; but I thought you said it was a long story."

"And so it would be if I were to tell you all I did and all I didn't, as Dickens says: how I overturned an old woman's stall, in my hurry, and how I lost my way, and had to ask it of such a *pretty girl*!"—

"No doubt," interrupted Elizabeth; "trust you military men for making the most of your opportunities. Mary, dear, you should look after your cousin. Here he comes, fresh from the jungle, ready to exalt all us rosy-cheeked Englishwomen into goddesses. You must take care and keep his heart free for him to take back unharmed to his comrades."

"I wish she *would* take my heart into her possession," muttered Charles, so low that Elizabeth could not hear him. But Mary did, being on the same side of the carriage, and a roseate flush passed suddenly over her face, and as suddenly subsided, leaving it paler than before.

Oh, these sensitive virgin hearts! how timidly they flutter! how their first idea of the exquisite happiness of loving is mingled in an almost equal degree with pain! It is only when the true maiden begins to feel the ineffable felicity of receiving a faithful heart in exchange for her own that she yields herself joyfully to the life in and for another, and that other, perhaps, but now a stranger.

Mary felt something of this, though she was too inexperienced to analyse her sensations. She would not at that moment, no, not for worlds, have had it supposed that she could think of Charles otherwise than as a cousin. Yet the mischief was in fact already done, and from this time the germs of a pure and

ardent affection, scattered there in childhood, all unknown to herself, budded forth in her innocent heart, warmed by the sun of Charles's scarce concealed tenderness.

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## CHAPTER VIII.—THE BALL.

OUR friends soon arrived at Ivy Cottage, and drove into the court-yard, whose large green gates had been thrown open for the reception of the company. Charles jumped nimbly to the ground, and handed out the two young ladies, Mr. Brown following at his leisure. Servants received them, and took the gentlemen's hats, while Mary and Elizabeth deposited their shawls in the cloak-room. They then made their way through a complete greenery to a small room upstairs, where tea and coffee were handed, and thence to the ball-room, which they approached through an avenue of the most exquisite flowering shrubs. Mr. Stewart had evidently spared no expense to celebrate the evening of age of his eldest son. Mr. Brown and Elizabeth took the lead, Charles and Mary following. They found themselves in most fashionable time, the room being almost filled. Mrs. Stewart was standing at the upper end, surrounded by a circle of gentlemen, and as our party made their way towards her, many were the friendly faces that smiled upon them, and still more numerous the glances of curiosity directed towards Charles, who was in full regimentals, and whose distinguished figure alone would have drawn attention upon him. The young lieutenant little regarded the gazers; he was whispering a request that Mary would honour him with her hand for the first quadrille. She blushed a smiling assent, and they arrived within the circle surrounding Mrs. Stewart. Mr. Brown and Elizabeth had already paid their compliments to their hostess, and she now turned away from them, and greeted Mary with much affection, after which Charles underwent the ceremony of an introduction.

But the music strikes up, and Charles leads his fair companion to one of the sets that are being formed down the long room. The band was particularly good, as Mr. Stewart piqued himself on his musical discrimination, and light feet and graceful forms moved buoyantly to its stirring cadences. Many beautiful girls were there that night, but our pretty little heroine outshone them all in her pure and sweet femininity, and not a few admiring eyes followed her lithe movements, as she floated along

like some fair spirit, her blue eyes sparkling with delight. Her father stood near in all the pride of his paternity. "She is my daughter, sir," answered he, exultingly, to a gentleman new to the neighbourhood, who unwittingly demanded of him who was "that lovely creature opposite, the sylph in white muslin." Many were the tender glances cast by Charles upon his beautiful companion, as she thus moved through the dance, attracting the attention of all beholders. At length the quadrille concluded, and he gave her his arm, and together they strolled towards the recess of a deep bay window which was almost hidden by flowers and shrubs.

\* \* \* \* \*

The music again struck up, and this time for a waltz, and Walter Stewart was seen fussing about everywhere in search of Mary Brown.

"Where is Miss Brown? Has any one seen Miss Brown? Mamma, have *you* seen Mary lately?"

"No, my dear; the last time I had a glimpse of her, she was dancing with Mr. Davidson, and that is half an hour ago."

"Then I suppose Mr. Davidson will be able to give some account of her."

But Mr. Davidson was nowhere to be found. At last Walter discovered them in the recess.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed he: "why, here they are! Do you know, Mr. Davidson, there has been a general search for you, and Miss Brown also. I can't think how you contrived to remain in unconsciousness of the outcry that has been made. Mary, come, I want you to waltz with me."

Mary accepted his offered arm, glad to escape from her own confusion, while Charles, somewhat annoyed, followed them out of the recess. Miss Craven soon perceived our discomfited hero.

"Mr. Davidson, where *have* you been all this time? I began to suspect that you had tired of our countrified doings, and had taken yourself off."

"May I have the honour?" stammered Charles, well nigh surprised into a blush by her mischievous glance.

"Oh! certainly. I expected you to ask that question long ago, but I suppose you were better engaged."

"For mercy's sake, Miss Craven, let me alone."

"Poor young man! I am afraid it is a bad case." And away they whirled in the gay waltz.

But faster whirled the brain of our anxious lover. He was thinking of all that he had said, and all that Mary had looked, during that last half-hour, when, forgetful of the throng around, he had ventured to murmur into her timid ear the tale of his

devoted affection. True, it was sudden, to all appearance the growth of a few hours; yet memory, dwelling upon the past, assured him that his heart, even in boyhood, had been powerfully drawn towards the sweet girl who had shared his youthful sports.

Mary had said little, looked little, yet that scant answer had given Charles hope. What wonder, then, that he should be so absent as to draw upon himself the laughing reproofs of Elizabeth? What wonder that he continued waltzing round and round the room until all the other couples had, one by one, dropped off, and his partner was breathless and dizzy; from which condition he himself was only saved by the thronging imaginations within, which prevented him too well remarking that which passed without? At length Elizabeth succeeded in making him understand that she wished to sit down, and he, in much confusion, released her.

"I fear I have been making a great fool of myself," said he.

"And of me, too," answered Elizabeth. "I shall take care, Mr. Davidson, how I accept another invitation to waltz with you."

"Really, you must pardon me, Miss Craven. I—I—was thinking of something, and did not observe what we were doing."

"A very pretty excuse, sir, when you should have been attending to your partner. However, I forgive you, under the circumstances."—And she fixed upon him her penetrating eye, which this time did really succeed in making him redden.

"Well, since you can blush, I have some hope of you. I dare say you are very sorry for your misdemeanours. And now be off, for I am tired of you; and see! there is Mary looking at us."

"But won't you allow me to escort you to the refreshment-room?"

"That is another matter. Perhaps I will, if you will promise to behave like a reasonable creature, and not overturn a jelly or a glass of wine on my dress. We can take up Mary on our way, for she looks quite lonely, poor girl, notwithstanding all the gay sparks around her."

It was with a throb of delight that Charles found himself once more by Mary's side; for it must be owned that his fear of Elizabeth's sarcasm would have prevented him from openly making his way through the throng towards the lovely being who had awakened in his bosom affection so deep as to be accompanied with unwonted timidity.

Mary received him with a smile, and a vivid blush. Her emotion was not unobserved by Elizabeth, who began to

suspect that matters had progressed further than she had at first believed. "Oh, oh!" thought she, "I wonder what the old gentleman will say." And she looked round for Mr. Brown, but that worthy individual was nowhere to be seen, having emigrated some time before into the card-room, where he was at that moment enduring a lengthy scold from his host. Mr. Stewart was as fastidious at the whist-table, as in the music-saloon, and with him good, easy Mr. Brown, stood no chance at all. However, leaving the old gentleman to his purgatory, let us follow our principal characters into the refreshment-room.

Good old English hospitality, may'st thou never flee from out these remote corners of the land before the freezing breath of fashion! Fashion! that denounces the natural needs as vulgarities, and sets us down to a few *plats* of nothings, frothy as itself—insipid as its *causeries*, and limited in quantity as its real enjoyment. Give me the board groaning with old-fashioned fare—the game and fowls, and tongue and pigeon-pies for hunger—the jellies and custards and creams for taste. And give me likewise the blooming faces of the lively girls around, sufficiently refined, yet not too delicate to partake heartily of the toothsome viands spread before them, which will renew their spirits for the merry dance. But then I am an old-fashioned man, and possibly many of my readers will disagree with me, so "we will say no more about it."

Elizabeth soon gave up all expectation of being properly attended to by Charles, who was too much occupied in seeing after Mary's comfort to bestow a thought upon her cousin. And though our little Mary was usually the very reverse of selfish, yet we must own that on this occasion she soon forgot her friend Elizabeth, and became gradually engrossed by the dearer relation, who was speedily becoming an object of the deepest interest. So Elizabeth attached herself to young Stewart, who was only too proud of obtaining her especial notice.

Mr. Brown now came wandering in, and was immediately provided with an immense slice of pigeon-pie by Walter, who seemed to have an eye on everybody. Mary's father was naturally obtuse, or he could not have failed to perceive his dear little girl's blushes, as she listened to the murmured words of Charles. However, nothing struck the good man as unusual, and he finished his supper with great complacency. When he had done, he looked round to remind the young people that it was time to be thinking of the last quadrille; but not seeing any of them, he made his way back into the ball-room, where he found the whole length of the floor occupied by a country

dance, the two most untiring couples in which were Walter and Elizabeth, Charles and Mary. Mary was dancing in the very gladness of her heart, and looking more lovely than ever, though her ringlets were somewhat dishevelled by the heat of the room.

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## CHAPTER IX.—THE RECESS.

BUT balls, like other sublunary things, must come to an end sometime, and the flagging spirits of the dancers soon evinced that their exertions were beginning to tell upon their wearied frames. Charles and Mary had already succumbed, and had retreated once more to their green recess.

“Dearest,” was he now murmuring, “am I to believe that this is a reality, this, the most blissful dream of all my life? And when I am again called upon to quit my native land, will you leave your father to go with me, Mary?”

“Ah! Charles, could you not give up your profession? You say that you have money.”

“Yes, Mary; but, after all the expence that my father incurred to place me in my present position, I could not allow myself to disappoint him so much. Besides, I love my profession.”

“I thought you said that you——”

“Loved me,” you would say, my own darling. Why so I do, let this be witness.”

“Oh fie! Charles. So soon!”

“So soon! Why, Mary dear, I used to do it hundreds of times before I went to India.”

“Yes, but you were a boy then, you know.”

“Well, what of that? I loved you then, Mary, I know it now, though I understood it not until I saw you this time. But Mary, dearest, to return to the subject of your father. You may set your little heart at rest about leaving him. There is no occasion to talk about that yet, as I have full two years’ leave of absence. And many changes may occur in that time, Mary.”

“Oh! Charles, I am so glad. I had no idea that you were allowed to be absent so long.”

“It is even so, and in this interval, sweet, we will be united, and show the world in general, and your good papa in particular, how happy and wise a thing it is to marry for love. But you are blushing, darling! Why! Mary. Just turn your face this way, and let me look at you, you little goose.”

"Charles, how ridiculous you are!"

"What have I done now? You women are such strange creatures. I don't think I shall ever be able to understand you thoroughly."

"Well, Charles, never mind. You will find us out in time, I dare say. Be quiet! some one is peeping round that myrtle."

"What do I care? Are you not my own Mary?"

"But then, you know, you have not yet asked papa."

"That does not signify. I have not a doubt of his consent. He loves us both too well, dearest."

Hush! some one is coming. It is papa."

"Why, Molly," said Mr. Brown, as he advanced towards them, "after all my hunting for you, I find you here, and Charles too, I declare, close at hand. What a snug little corner this is!"

"Yes, papa, but what did you want me for?"

"It is getting late, my darling, and I wish you to go home. Elizabeth is already in the cloak-room, waiting for us."

"Very well, papa, I am quite willing to go."

"Come along, then, and let us say good-night to Mrs. Stewart."

Mary accepted her father's offered arm, and Charles following, they took leave of their kind hostess; and proceeding down stairs to Elizabeth, whom they found engaged in a gay conversation with Walter, were soon rapidly leaving behind the hospitable mansion where so much pleasure had been experienced.

The moon sailed, queen-like, in the midst of fleecy clouds, which now obscured, and anon gave her to view in all the lustre of her loveliness, while the surrounding country looked dim, or calmly, mysteriously bright, as one aspect or the other prevailed. The evening harmonised well with the agitated hearts of the two young lovers, who alternately resigned themselves to their exceeding happiness, or delivered up their souls to the numberless, though vague apprehensions that ever attend the deepest of all earthly feelings.

It was Elizabeth who at length broke the silence that had prevailed for several minutes. "Well, uncle," exclaimed she, "how have you enjoyed the ball?"

"Pretty so, so, my dear; I have seen better, and I have seen worse."

"And you, Mr. Davidson?"

"I?" said Charles, starting. "I beg your pardon, Miss Craven, but I did not hear your first question."

"Why, what were you thinking of?"

"Oh, nothing particular."

Mary felt that her hand, which lay by her side, was gently pressed. *She* knew of what he was thinking.

"Well, for my part," resumed Elizabeth, "I never enjoyed a ball so much. What do you say, Mary?"

"I?—oh, I think it was very pleasant."

"Very pleasant, indeed; and with so indifferent a tone of voice! Why, Mary, you and Mr. Davidson are both alike. One speaks to you, just to ask you a civil question, and you both start as if it were something uncommon, and can say nothing but I—I. Uncle, don't you think they are bores?"

"Who? my dear."

"I declare, uncle, you are just as bad as they are. Your daughter and your nephew to be sure."

"I don't know, my dear. I thought they danced very well. What is the matter with them?"

"That is just what I want to know. Here they have been dancing away, and enjoying themselves at the ball as much as any one there, and now they have not a word to say about it."

"My dear Miss Craven—" interposed Charles.

"My disagreeable Mr. Davidson," retorted Elizabeth, "I beg you won't apologise. I will not trouble you for any more of your exceedingly enlivening conversation. I am going to indulge myself with a brown study, like other people;" and she leaned back, and fixed her mischievous eyes determinedly on a small white cloud at that moment sailing slowly across the sky.

"I should call it rather a *blue* study," said Charles, rousing himself to talk, "for you now look most decidedly astronomical. Pray what do you see in the sky? Something 'very like a whale?'"

"Don't bore me with your Shakespere, sir."

"Mary," inquired Mr. Brown, suddenly, "where were you all the time that young Stewart was seeking you to dance with him?"

"I, papa? Oh, didn't you see me? I was—I was—let me see, where was I?"

"Nay, my dear, I did not intend to puzzle you so much. But it is odd, too, that you should be lost for so long a time and not know where you were."

"Not at all, sir;" said Charles, coming to the rescue. "I believe she and I were together most of the time, somewhere about."

"Well, well, Charley, if you were with her I suppose it was all right, for you would take care of her, I am sure."

"Oh yes, sir." And there was another pressure of a small hand.

Silence now ensued; for Mr. Brown was very sleepy, and

Elizabeth did not feel disposed for another attempt at teasing. At length the chaise stopped. Mr. Brown woke up with a start, and our party were safely deposited at their own green gate. Elizabeth hastened into the house, for the night was cold, and Mr. Brown followed, but Charles and Mary lingered under the porch for a few moments.

“Then to-morrow morning I ask your father, sweet?”

“Yes, Charles. Oh, how I wonder what he will say.”

“Fear not, dear Mary, I am sure he will consent.”

And the young man folded her in a tender embrace, as he murmured some words of deeper love.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Brown and Elizabeth were waiting in the drawing room, when Mary entered it alone.

“How slow you have been in coming, Mary; and where is Charley?”

“Yes, where is he, papa?” and the little girl blushed, but it was not perceived by the dim light of Mr. Brown’s bed-candle.

“I am sure I don’t know, my dear. I thought he was with you. He must have slipped off to bed. But how strange, to go without bidding good night!”

“Oh! I dare say he was very tired,” said Elizabeth, yawning; “he was so stupid all the ride.”

“Yes, he was evidently knocked up, and I am sure I am. Let us go to bed too.”

And soon the house was wrapped in profound repose. But two beings in that quiet dwelling were not sleeping. Many blissful thoughts were in their hearts, and images of future ineffable happiness were hovering around. The moonbeams glided through the unshuttered windows, and slept upon their faces, young, beautiful, and lighted up with pleasant hopes and varying fancies, and when the grey dawn came slowly over the sky, Charles and Mary slept also.

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#### CHAPTER X.—THE DEPARTURE.

Two years after the scenes we have attempted to describe, a large steam-ship was sailing for India. The morning was bright and breezy, the waves dashed with a pleasant sound against the

paddle-boxes, and the deck was thronged with passengers. Among these, one group attracted universal attention and interest.

A fair girl was talking as only mothers *can* talk, to a beautiful boy about a year old. The little fellow crowed joyously, and seemed mightily disposed to leap into the sea, but was restrained by his nursemaid, who held him firmly in her vigorous arms. An old gentleman leaned over the side of the vessel, watching the spray as it broke into a thousand rainbows. In his kind and comfortable aspect, his white hat and buckled shoes, no one who had once seen him could have failed to recognise our old friend Mr. Brown.

It was indeed he, who had, with characteristic good nature and self-abnegation, consented to relinquish all his old habits, and to accompany his little Mary and her husband to a distant land; braving all the inconveniences of a long journey to a tropical climate for the sake of his sweet daughter's society. And Charles, the proud and delighted Charles, gazed on his young wife and her beautiful boy until tears of happiness came into his eyes.

But the vessel is rapidly leaving the shores of old England, and many a handkerchief is waved, and then applied to dry the tears naturally shed at parting. So as we catch the last glimpse of our lovely heroine, and while the vessel becomes a mere speck upon the horizon, we will wave ours also and heartily wish her and hers "God speed!"

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## THE COMPLAINT.

### ON PHYLLIS ABSENT.

*Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda.*

Know'st thou what 'tis to nurse a hidden flame—  
 To have a hotbed of desires within—  
 To burn with longings which we dare not name,  
 Because, without, we show a wrinkled skin ?

Youth only has the privilege to sin :  
Disgusting age sets amourous thoughts to flight :  
Sweet kisses dwell not on a stubbled chin :  
In hoary locks what maiden takes delight ?  
For Cupid drops his bow, and mocks the luckless wight.

Will Phyllis listen, if I tune the lyre ?  
Ah ! no ; she heeds not when I call her fair.  
My vows and constancy but seem to tire.  
She says she pities me, but love's not there.  
And if I cry, "Tis more than I can bear,  
She laughs aloud, and ridicules my pain ;  
She checks my wooing with an empty stare, —  
Asks what I'm sighing for, if I complain,  
And turns and titters loud with coxcombs in her train.

Say, who can bear to pass the livelong night  
In restless slumbers, broken by sad dreams ;  
To count the clock, and sigh for coming light,  
And, unrefreshed, to rise when morning beams ?  
Of all misfortunes, this the greatest seems,  
To be alone, to share no fond caress,  
To kiss no lips where life's warm current streams ;  
To long for her, whose form you may not press : —  
Far better 'tis to die than taste such wretchedness !

My lonely couch is witness to my sighs,  
My moistened pillow only knows my tears ;  
Night comes, and sorrow shuts my weary eyes,  
And sorrow opens them when day appears.  
I mourn, but no one my complaining hears,  
For she I love is frolicsome and gay.  
Time flies too fast, and my declining years  
Deaden all hope, and ever seem to say,  
Make haste, make haste ! for thou soon nature's debt  
must pay.

Oh ! God, inscrutable are thy decrees !  
The longest life is but a little span.  
Spendthrifts of pleasure, whilst there's power to please,  
We toil to please when we no longer can :  
Such is the foolish history of man !  
And, ere his short and troubled journey's done,  
Cordials and slops the dying embers fan.  
And, when a few more sickly years are won,  
He sinks into his tomb for worms to feed upon.

And will not Time have pity on our youth,  
 And must our beauty and our strength decay?  
 Can no cosmetic colour o'er the truth?  
 And shall these eyes grow dim, these hairs turn gray?  
 Must this athletic form be bent some day?  
 And must my memory fail, my brow be lined  
 With wrinkles, and my muscles waste away?  
 Shall I perchance be toothless, deaf, and blind?  
 And must I die, and leave life's pleasures all behind?

Maiden, adieu ! I had not dared to sing  
 Such uncouth strains, which minstrels might not own,  
 But Holy Writ itself had tuned my string :—  
 One text there is to every spinster known,  
 “It is not good for man to live alone.”  
 For single blessedness I’ve sought in vain.  
 Not wealth, not honours, can for this atone :  
 And, as thy absence causes me such pain,  
 I needs must mourn and pine, and wish thee back again.

M.

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#### A VULGAR CRITIQUE.

I KNOW not if Mr. Coates be living, who some years since excited a great deal of attention as an amateur performer at one of our theatres, but no doubt there are many who, like myself, have witnessed his performances; and remember also, that, from the part of Romeo being a favourite with him, he acquired the soubriquet of Romeo Coates, and long retained it.

They will likewise recollect that he possessed, either by purchase or inheritance, (some people said he hired them !) a collection of beautiful diamonds, in the shape of coat-buttons, sword-knots, and shoe-buckles. These he lost no opportunity of exhibiting upon the stage; and, when supposed to be laying dead there, in some particular parts, the gallery would cry out, “Coates, you’ve lost your buckle!” whereupon, forgetting the fact of his assumed death, in his desire to ascertain another fact more affecting his worldly interests, he would gently raise his head, and then fall back again into the old position; shouts of laughter followed, and generally lasted till the curtain fell.

Now, for this, poor Coates was thought to be rather daft, inasmuch as his folly dispelled the illusion supposed to be produced on the minds of an audience, who might otherwise have gone home almost impressed with the idea, that the hero of the piece had *really* died, as the plot required he should do.

On visiting Paris, however, shortly afterwards, I found our lively neighbours exhibiting at their theatres, night after night, what appeared to me equally ridiculous, if not more so;—gods and goddesses, angels or devils, kings or queens, whether they had ascended to the skies, or gone to the grave, no matter which, were there obliged to come forth, after the conclusion of the play, in robes or shrouds, wings or tails, to acknowledge any peculiar approbation an audience might choose to show of their performance.

Of course, the result was the same as that which Romeo Coates produced in London, by looking at his jewellery; but, still, the French saw nothing strange in it, although the English *then* did, and even pointed out the absurdity of it, adding, (as I have often heard them,) that Kemble and Mrs. Siddons might be called a long time before *they* would come forward, as Talma and Madame Duschenois were obliged to do, like showmen in front of a booth. The Frenchmen shrugged their shoulders, and said, “*Mais que voulez vous, monsieur, c'est la mode,*” and, that (truly enough,) fashion could reconcile us to anything.

“What, ‘*par example*,’ observed one of my shrewdest Parisian friends (a *vieux militair*, who owed both parties a grudge), “what *can* be more ridiculous than for a refined people, like you English, to adopt the absurd custom of these barbarian cossacks, in wearing superfine kerseymere trowsers over stout leather boots, thus leaving the former to receive the very dirt from which the latter should protect them? Indeed,” he continued, “yours is not even a correct copy of them, after all; for these wild fellows only wear thick skin shoes, and trowsers as coarse as themselves, while *you* select the best cloth you can find.”

Here the old soldier had got the upper hand of me, I confess, and I could only acknowledge it by another of those shrugs, which, in France, say anything or nothing, just as you please! Still, I never *did* expect to see the day when the aforesaid theatrical absurdity would find such favour in England, and still less the hour when it would be carried to such an excess, as that to which foreigners say we do carry everything we copy—good, bad, or indifferent.

Well, soon after it was introduced amongst us, I happened to have taken my seat at Drury Lane, on the fifth row of the

pit, to witness Kean's performance of the part of Richard the Third, in which he was just then so deservedly popular.

Of course, I expected to find none near me, but those to whom this said fifth row was generally supposed to be almost sacred. Judge, however, of my astonishment at discovering by my side, two young (male and female) rustics, who had come early, like myself, and had taken that seat by mere chance or luck, on the fifth row.

Whether they were brother and sister, lovers, or man and wife, I could hardly make out. They were rather too fond, I thought, for either the former or the latter relation to each other, and yet hardly affectionate enough for the other.

Nevertheless that is of little import; enough that they were very communicative, and that was plain, as the following dialogue will show, which I noted down at the time, because it seemed to present, not only an unsophisticated critique on the play itself, but, upon that very custom to which I have just now alluded. Nor have the many years that have since passed away, at all changed my opinion of the fact. But to proceed.

When Pope (who certainly *looked* the monarch well,) came forward as Henry VI., and commenced his part with that fine sonorous voice which so peculiarly belonged to him, my male neighbour, (whom we will call John), turned to his fair companion, and said—

"There, Sal, there he is! that's him; Bairn't he a fine looking chap—just like a king, zure enough? Do let's clap our hands for'un quite loudly"—which certainly they did, and continued to do at almost every word he uttered: till at last some peculiar expression so delighted the audience generally, that several persons cried out, "Bravo! Pope. Well done, Pope. Pope for ever!" etc.; whereupon John became instantly silent for a moment or two, and then turning round to me, said—

"Zur, please, zur, ain't that ere the king?"

"To be sure it is," I replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, zur, because I hears folks call out, Well done the *Pope*! which puzzled Sal and I; so we thought we must be wrong about 'un."

"Oh no!" I observed, "it is *Mr.* Pope playing the part of the king—that's all, my friend."

Whereupon, looking full at his companion, I heard him say—

"Why, Sal, that ere ain't the king, ater all; it's only *Mr.* Pope; and the real king is to come on presently, this gentleman says."

"Well, well, never mind," replied Sal; "he's a fine fellow, whoever he be; so hold your tongue."

But, from that time till Kean did appear, the acclamations of this excited couple rested only to burst out like a suppressed irruption, with greater violence, when their unknown and hitherto unseen favourite *did* come forth. Then, so vehemently did both join in the general welcome given to him, that I could not help inquiring if either had ever seen Kean play in all their lives before?

They admitted they certainly had not.

"Suppose, then," said I, "you were just to hear him speak, and see him play a little, before you make quite so much noise."

"Well, well, that's very true; but then, you know, zur, it's as well to encourage 'un a bit at first. Ain't it?"

Smiling at such simple reasons, I now resolved quietly to watch the workings of their unsophisticated minds and senses throughout the whole play, fully satisfied that the result would give me a more unbiassed critique than I should read from the pen of many a shorthand writer near me, be he who he may.

At all events, here it is: as far as my memory could retain their impetuous words.

When first the wily Glo'ster begins to succeed in wooing the Lady Anne, poor Sally's indignant spirit broke out with the following exclamation against what she evidently considered a libel on her sex.

"Oh! for shame on you, Miss! shame on you! Don't you see, he has just killed the king, and that he'll kill you next?"— and so loudly, too, was this uttered, that even John felt it necessary to request she would lower her tones a little.

But no; the more Lady Anne seemed likely to yield, the more poor Sal thought it necessary to warn her of her danger; and when the former exclaims,—

"If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide, these nails should rend this beauty from my cheeks"—

Sal again jumped up, and cried more loudly than before,—

"Ah, do! that's right! Scratch his eyes out, and send 'un away directly; or else the nasty wretch will over persuade ye, depend on't. I know he will."

The interruption given to the performance by these exclamations were certainly borne with wonderful patience, and almost applauded by those around us, who saw the genuine source from whence they sprung, and consequently endured them.

The rather inelegant manner, therefore, in which Lady Anne next shews her anger by *spitting* at Glo'ster, seemed quite to Sal's taste, and she applauded accordingly. But the cold reluctance which her ladyship afterwards manifested to plunge the proffered sword into its owner's breast was met by the severest condem-

nation, in the shape of a hiss, which our indignant rustics could bestow.

Sal, indeed, saw through the gross flattery of Richard, which the great dramatist would have you think a refined lady of the day did not ; and she vehemently exclaimed more than once,—“Oh, kill ‘un, Miss ; kill ‘un, I say. Don’t listen to ‘un, Miss. He don’t mean a word he says. Any body may see that.” When, therefore, Lady Anne, on the contrary, “bids him live,” and moreover accepts the proffered ring, poor John really was compelled to interfere, even to the extent of putting his hand before her mouth, lest the audience (hitherto amused by Sal’s excitement and simplicity,) should insist upon her being turned out of the theatre.

A calm consequently followed, but something very like the rumbling of another irruption, was audible in Sal’s mouth, when next the sickly Edward appeared, and whose part was played by a girl ; it however happily found vent in the following subdued colloquy :—

SAL.—“ How like a girl that ere young king looks !”

JOHN.—“ Oh ! kings always does, when they be children ; don’t ye know that ?”

SAL.—“ Ah ! but this un has such a squeaking voice, just like my little sister Patty, for all the world. I can’t fancy un a boy at all, nor I don’t think it be, that’s flat.

JOHN.—“ But he is, though ; only, you knows, Sal, it would be vulgar for a young king to talk like anybody else !”

SAL.—“ Very well ! very well !—so do now hold your tongue, and let’s hear what the young un has to say to old Hunchback there !”

Sally, indeed, throughout the whole play, proved herself by far the best critic of the two, and no assurance of John’s “ that it was all pure natur,” could convince her that the little Duke of York, (who only appeared about six years of age,) “ was not taught to say all the fine things hur did, and all them new fangled words he used, for,” says she, “ kings’ boys aint no wiser than other folks at their age, I guess ; d’ye think they be, John ?”

Nor did it escape this shrewd girl’s observation afterwards, when the lord mayor and aldermen appeared, “ that if *they* had been ‘real uns,’ they’d a looked a deal fatter than them ere sticks on the stage.”

Certainly the city dignitaries were ill-chosen for the occasion, and *I* even thought they *might*, by the aid of paint and false stuffing, have been made to look much more like originals.

Next, when Richard wound up his prevarication with Buckingham, by saying, somewhat testily, of course,—

"Thou troublest me, I'm not in the giving vein."

it was then that poor Sally was once more roused, and half rising from her seat, first pointed her finger at the stage with a sort of derision, and next clapping her hands, exclaimed:—

"Sarved you right, Master Lord; sarved you right, for telling such big lies as you did just now, to all them ere lord mayors and aldermen, and all the rest on um."

Nor was Queen Elizabeth spared for *seeming* to listen to Richard's overtures in favour of her daughter, and even the more tranquil John observed to the indignant Sal:—

"Well, sure enough, women must have been uncommon fools in them ere days."

As the ghosts of those he had murdered appeared to Richard in his dream, both John and Sal drew themselves up with mute astonishment; but though they *said* nothing for several minutes, "there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gestures; they looked as though they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed,—but the wisest beholder could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow."

It was very amusing, nevertheless, to watch their strange gestures, and hardly to be wondered at, for in truth the scene was well got up; when, therefore, Richard starts from his sleep, comes forward apparently agonized with fear, and commences his soliloquy, the affrighted Sal not only started too, but actually shrieked aloud, and (had she known how) would perhaps have fainted; but this latter exhibition we were spared, and public attention diverted from her scream, by a blundering fellow who acted Ratcliff, and who, by his slow utterance, reminded me of the following (rather old) story of some itinerant performer, that in the same part, when asked by Richard,— "Who's there?"—answered, "It's I, my lord, the early village cock—" and, here forgetting the rest of the sentence, he stopped more than once, to the great amusement of the audience, and only when the good-natured Richard put the question a third time, was able to add—"has thrice done salutation to the morn, my lord."

Our rustic neighbours, however, saw nothing very particular in his hesitation, but charitably attributed what they did see to fear, both declaring "they didn't wonder at all at the poor fellow being frightened in such a place as that, full of ghosts, hobgoblins, and they didn't know what all."—"I am sure," added Sal, "if that ere chap had spoken to me so, *I* couldn't have answered un for half an hour, I'm sure."

Again, when Richard and Richmond enter fighting, the feelings of my two rustics were positively excited to a very great

pitch, in favour of the latter, and execrations were vehemently uttered against the former.—I cannot repeat half of them; enough that they both heartily rejoiced in the result, and cordially joined in exclaiming with the performers,—

“Long live King Henry the Seventh!”

And here might they have rested quite satisfied, in the pleasing belief that vice had been justly punished, and virtue as truly rewarded,—a moral evidently intended by our immortal bard:—but no! the stupid fashion, so lately imported from Paris, by our English play-goers, and submitted to by their theatrical managers, marred this most agreeable illusion: and after Richmond—the victorious Richmond, from whom we had just parted, under a full impression that he was gone to rest from his toils, and perhaps to revel in the adulations offered to royalty, successful,—had come jauntily forward, to say:—“Ladies and gentlemen, to-morrow evening this play will be repeated;” (or, in other words, “I shall then make believe to be a king again, instead of the simple player you behold me;”) then followed, bowing, the *dead* Richard, once more raised to life, by the vociferations of his admirers, from whom (like many other friends, in poor Kean’s life,) he must often have wished to be saved. In the present instance, he certainly did, and looked as though he did; for, as *yet* unaccustomed to these silly honours, it was evident he felt the great and very glaring absurdity of such foolish compliments. How much more would he have done so, (I thought then, and I think now,) could he have seen the chap-fallen countenances of my ingenuous neighbours, and heard these truthful remarks.—Both actually seemed ready to weep, when they muttered to each other:—“Well, I declare, I had quite forgotten we were at the play-house, and that all they fine kings and queens were only folks like we, and no more killed than either of us be.”

“Come along,” they said to each other, “come along; let us go home, and tell father what we’ve seen at a London play-house, which, I’m sure, he never heard of when the player-men used to come down to B——, and play there in our barn.”

John, however, reminded her that there was a farce, or, as he called it, something funny to come yet; nor will anybody think he was very wrong, when I add, that Mathews and Liston appeared before us in Love, Law, and Physic!

Of course, throughout the whole of this, laughter and noise were more permissible than during the preceding tragedy, but I dare not trust my pen to record all the jokes, gibes, and expressions of delight uttered by my young critics. The reader’s imagination must supply these.

Enough, that those inimitable performers were not called forward, and that they had tended greatly to remove the disappointed feelings produced by such a ridiculous custom being so far tolerated even on the part of first-rate tragedians.

Now, I fear there is not even this exception in favour of a modern harlequin ; and, indeed, I have some notions that I saw the horses, but certainly the equestrians, made to offer their obeisances, at Astley's, when last there, which is, no doubt, some time ago ; but still I think it is *since* the French Troup had so justly found favour in England for their *other* feats, and who might perhaps have introduced this bowing of *horses* with the same facility that it had been done by the greater tragedians of France, or the admirable buffox of Italy. Nevertheless, let us hope it will be a long time before English people get up all those scenes which other countries have lately exhibited in their streets, their senates, and diplomacies, but rather be content with imitating them in the improving any habits of ours that may be as ridiculous with us, as passports were with them. Both will, ere long, I expect, see the folly and excess to which that custom is carried, and in condemnation of which I offer you this vulgar but honest critique.

S.

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## THE WIDOW 'TO HER CHILD.

(WRITTEN TO ILLUSTRATE A PICTURE.)

BY MRS. ABDY.

Dismiss thy fears, my gentle child, nor look so sad and pale,  
The cruel world has mocked thee with a false and heartless  
tale ;

Thy mother will not lay the robes of sacred woe aside,  
She may not hear another's vows, she may not be a bride.

Thy father's friend has often o'er thy infant cradle hung,  
And caught the lisping accents of thy faint, imperfect tongue ;  
Thy guide and monitor through life, I trust that he may be,  
But *more* he cannot, shall not be, my cherished one, to thee.

Yet more he fain would be to us—I seek not to disguise  
 That this pale cheek and wasted form find favour in his eyes ;  
 And ever when he pleads his suit in low and timid tone,  
 He speaks of thee, and vows through life to love thee as his  
 own.

My kinsmen daily urge his cause, my cold reserve they blame,  
 They tell me of his fair estate, his high and stainless name :  
 Thou may'st, they say, those honours share, those benefits  
 partake,  
 And I should smile upon his suit, if only for thy sake.

Alas ! my child, they know us not, they reck not how we  
 dwell  
 In true, deep constancy on him who loved us both so well ;  
 How we together fondly talk of past and joyous years,  
 And call up tender memories, and mingle mournful tears.

We breathe no rebel word against the God of might and  
 love,  
 Who took him from his happy home to live with saints above,  
 Yet hourly in our walks and ways his image we retrace,  
 And never could we bear to see another in his place.

All this I told my lover—and he promised, while he sighed,  
 Never again to strive to shake a faith so firm and tried.  
 He will not now by murmured vows, or stolen looks offend,  
 Still will he come beneath our roof, yet come but as a friend.

Then clear thy brow, my treasured one, thy anxious thoughts  
 forego,  
 Thou art thy mother's only hope, her only tie below ;  
 A rival in this faithful heart thou hast not cause to dread,  
 'Tis wedded, fondly wedded, to the memory of the dead.

## THE VEILED PORTRAIT.

BY MRS. EDWARD THOMAS.

## CHAPTER I.

" Yet was there light around her brow,  
 A holiness in those dark eyes,  
 Which show'd—though wand'ring earthward now—  
 Her spirit's home was in the skies."—MOORE.

IT was one of those bright clear days of the early spring, when the sun, awakening from the long torpor of winter, shining with the invigoration of renewed powers, sheds a vivid and sparkling resplendency over every scene; investing all nature with a dancing gleam, and sending a gush of gladness, even to the most world-worn and weary heart; burnishing, as it were, with the alchymy of Heaven, the face of the sin-darkened Earth, and kindling it once more, almost to the glow of its primeval glory; penetrating, like Hope, through the dismal and gloomy chinks and crannies of Despair, to irradiate the captive of sorrow, and beam on the felon of remorse; pointing with a finger of light, to where all may find comfort and pardon. Sad and cheerless indeed must be that heart, which can resist the exhilaration of such a season of universal rejoicing, and not feel, like the birds and flowers, an involuntary up-springing to the skies. Yet some such there are, alas! and not a few, who, sitting in the very shadow of death, cast around them by some tempest-cloud of woe, perceive not the outward brilliancy illuminating the birth of spring. And two such, on that bright day, might be seen in the picture-gallery of one of those old baronial mansions of England, so rich in the feudal treasures—so gorgeous in the costly heir-looms, hoarded from generation to generation, until, from custom, their value is absolutely forgotten. They were both young—both beautiful; but a shade of pensiveness subdued the vivacious loveliness of the girl, whilst a sterner and more marked anguish distorted every expressive feature of the boy.

The sun, streaming through the richly-coloured glass windows, rested on their faces with a mellowed radiance, and brought out their graceful and elegant figures with a statuesque-like perfection, displaying every lineament, every curve of their fair and lithe proportions, and lending a ruby glow to their pallid and tear-dewed cheeks.

But they, insensible alike to their mutual beauty—their mutual sorrow; insensible to the vivifying ray glancing on all

around; insensible to the wondrous works of art its light rendered perfectly dazzling; insensible to all save the one picture they stood hand-in-hand before, and it was covered with a thick black cloth curtain, to which was fastened a piece of paper, on which was written in large legible characters, "Not to be withdrawn by my children on their peril:" could think only of that. Whether it was that mysterious prohibition which daily awakened the curiosity for years, which otherwise might have slept in the calmness of unexcited desire—or whether the intense wish to behold the object thus concealed arose from the purer instinct attributed to our nature, it is impossible to decide; but the inclination, at first so vague, so slightly rooted, had now become a ruling, a paramount passion, a devouring thought, burning and parching up the very vitality of their young being, destroying every other feeling, absorbing every other faculty, and alluring their minds from every other pursuit; their whole souls being occupied with the dream-vision of that forbidden, and consequently, most interesting picture, particularly the boy's, he literally spending his feverish existence in the precincts of the shrine, which contained the unknown idol of his heart's worship, until it had become imperative to satisfy its longings. Never before had he felt so determined to do so; never before had he stood by that veiled mystery with so firm a resolution to unravel it; never before had he fixed his eyes on that enshrouding drapery with so unalterable a resolve to penetrate beneath its grave-like folds.

Like one who has indeed made up his mind to a great, to an important, almost awful deed, he extended his hand with a nervous gesture to grasp the cumbrous curtain, whilst his whole frame dilated, and his breath came thick and pantingly from his parted lips.

"Ernest! Ernest!" exclaimed his terrified sister, laying her trembling hand on his upraised arm, "how can you be so rash? I dare not remain: I feel as if we were on the eve of committing a tremendous act of guilt, one which will give a dark colour to all our future lives, a sorrowfulness, a repentance, never more to be overcome, never more to be forgotten, for we have been forbidden by our father to look on that picture at the peril of his displeasure; nay, he is now forbidding us, for that is his writing. Oh, my dearest brother, those few simple words appear to me as awful as the denouncing "*Mene Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*" of Babylon's impious king. Let us fly while there is yet time, let us shun temptation while within our power, for, will the gratification of mere curiosity repay us for the torment of conscious disobedience? The certainty that no hand can lift the darker veil you will now drop over the mind's integrity, if you persevere

in raising up that fatal curtain, ought to stay yours. Oh, for mercy, let it then, my brother."

"You are too timid, Agnes, too easily alarmed, too apt to imagine results which never can happen from that which I now purpose to effect. Were it to gratify a mere curiosity, not for one moment should I pause at shrinking as fearfully as yourself from the shadow of giving offence to our beloved father, but I am stimulated by no such unworthy motive; no, Agnes, it is to satisfy an intolerable craving after truth, an insupportable anxiety to know who that picture does represent, a holy yearning, a tender, an undefinable longing—for I solemnly believe it is our mother's."

"Our mother's?" screamed the excited girl, bounding back from the picture with a start of bewildering surprise. "Our mother's!" she repeated, lifting up her clasped hands almost imploringly towards the portrait, "then why are her children forbidden to see it? is it because she died so long ago, that it is imagined we should not still delight to gaze on the sweet young mother whom we never—never knew?"

"Agnes," said Ernest, drawing up close to his sister, and hissing, rather than speaking the annihilating words into her ear, "have you fortitude to listen to a very terrible conjecture—to more than a conjecture—to a very terrible truth? but no, you are too young, too inexperienced—you could not bear, without dying outright, to hear me say—"

"What, Ernest! what? speak, for the love of heaven."

"Well then, is it my secret conviction that our mother is not dead?"

"Not dead! she is, she must be dead; I have heard the mournful story of her early death, have wept over it from my very infancy—not dead, indeed; alas, Ernest, what folly is yours!"

"She is not dead, absolutely, eternally dead, Agnes; but she is dead—worse than dead to us."

"How mean you, Ernest?"

"She is dead to the children she has disgraced; dead to those she has covered with infamy and shame."

"Oh, my brother," sobbed the young girl, falling almost fainting on his shoulder, "how can you conceive anything so atrocious? My God, how can you, how dare you slander our mother thus? surely you have lost your reason."

"It is no slander—would that it were."

"Prove it! prove it! yet, no: I would not have it confirmed. Oh, Ernest! what a wretched creature have you made of your poor sister."

"I truly grieve for it, I truly deplore it, but the moment has

arrived for full and undisguised confidence ; compose yourself then, dry your tears and listen to me calmly, I entreat. I have need to unburthen this overcharged heart ; I have need of pity, sympathy, encouragement ; I have need of assistance to lay the perturbed spirit of dark and dreadful suspicion, haunting me for months and months, night and day, every hour, every instant, since I first began to think, wearing me to the shadow you see."

Is it then *only* from suspicion, my brother, that you thus malign my mother's memory to her child—her daughter?"

"No, Agnes, no, do pray listen to the end. You must remember when, as children, we were allowed to play in this very gallery, that often and often, when our poor father was present, and imagined that we were too much absorbed in our infantile amusements to observe him, how he would stride up and down with hasty and unmeasured steps, then stand lost in an agony of thought before that hidden picture, for a considerable time, and then, after looking from it to us with an expression of the most impassioned melancholy, rush in tears to his own room, locking the door with a grating loudness, which echoed through the whole house. This extraordinary emotion, coupled with the profound dejection under which he constantly laboured, together with the secluded life he led, and more than all, the convulsive manner in which he would frequently strain us to his bosom ; so much more like the embraces of agonised commiseration than the spontaneous expansion of glad and proud affection, that—"

"That what ? what has all this to do with shame, infamy, and disgrace ? how will you prove our mother is not dead by this ? Is it not natural that he, knowing that she *was* dead, knowing the loss *we* had sustained from her death, should stand before the picture of his angel wife—should glance with unutterable anguish from it to us, should catch us convulsively to his agitated bosom, and then rush to his own room to weep for the orphans who were too young and too ignorant to weep for themselves ? Oh, my brother, to think you could so have perverted the God-like meaning of such natural sensibility !"

"If you would but have patience, Agnes."

"Who could have patience to hear a mother's very ashes abused ?"

"Well then, you will not listen."

"Your pertinacity makes me tremble ; I dread lest there may be some truth."

"Too much ! too much ! but to resume ; I say, all I witnessed in my father created in me an insatiable eagerness to dive deeper into the secret recesses of his heart, to learn the reason

of all this cureless sorrow, this joyless wearing out of existence ; hence, he became to me an object of the most intense interest, the most acute vigilance. I watched his every movement, I observed his every action, I was a spy following his every footstep, and prying into his every thought : I felt how unworthy, how debased such conduct made me ; I sunk in my own estimation, but I had gone too far to recede, I had no alternative now but either to unfathom the dire mystery involving my miserable thoughts, or become a decided lunatic ; for in such tremendous examinations there is no medium ; the brain, wrought up to a certain pitch, must lose its balance, unless a miracle interposes to allay its frenzied excitement—that miracle could alone be in the gratification of that desire which was consuming me.

One night, Agnes, after a day of more than ordinary excitement, as I lay awake ruminating on the one ever-recurring and tormenting subject, I was startled from my harrowing reverie by the sudden flashing of a broad stream of light underneath my chamber door : so bright, so vivid, as for the moment to render every article in the room distinctly visible to my astonished gaze. I arose instantly, with the painful impression that the house must either be on fire, or under the power of midnight robbers. On opening my door with that stealthy caution so natural in those fearful of alarming others, or perhaps encountering danger themselves, and looking out, I saw the reflection of the light shining on the walls of this gallery ; and following the impulse of the moment, I advanced with noiseless steps towards it ; but instead of consuming flames, of nocturnal assassins, I beheld our poor father, pale, haggard, frantic, prostrate before that picture ; the curtain was drawn on one side ; the lamp which was placed on yonder table shone full upon it ; and what a ravishing countenance was revealed !

I stopped panic-stricken behind a chair which my father seemed to have drawn forward, and which completely concealed me from observation. I held my breath, that not the faintest sound might inform him that I was prying into the very anguish I yet hallowed, yet venerated ; but if he had discovered me, if he had pointed a dagger at the bosom of his treacherous son, I must have remained to brave his fiercest indignation, for now I was evidently about to learn all.

Extending his arms, as if to embrace the picture, he exclaimed, in a tone of agony that thrilled to my heart's core, "Once more I come to gaze on thy face, to talk to thy shadow, to see all that now remains to me, of my once beautiful, once innocent wife. Oh, my God ! my God ! who, in beholding that artless, that angelic expression, would, *could* believe, that she was innocent no longer—that she was polluted, disgraced, abandoned ; that

she could unquailingly encounter a myriad of grossly admiring eyes, court the approbation of the vulgar multitude, be solicitous of the applause of a vain and fickle world, winning its fleeting and degrading favours by those enchanting smiles—those smiles, once all, all my own?

“ ‘ O Emily, Emily ! what a reward for all my devotion, all my sacrifices ! Did I indeed deserve only this ? What wish did I ever leave ungratified ? what thought did I not anticipate ? Was not the longest day of summer still far, far too short for me to hover round you, to idolize you, to give up all for you ? When was I ever weary of your sweet company, ever languid in expressing the ardent affection you alone could inspire ? I worshipped you, Emily ; I forgot my God for you ; I neglected my soul’s salvation for you ; I obliterated all thoughts of another, a better world from my mind, for you ; I wished not for another ; you made this one a paradise for me ; and He avenged himself, for He is a jealous God. He sent the serpent into our Eden to tempt you to sting me. Oh yes ! to sting, but not to death. Would that it had ! the barbed and poisoned arrow of the seducer would not then still rankle in this lacerated heart, stirred to writhing agony daily and hourly by the hand of our unconscious children. Our children—yours and mine—how could you forsake them ? How could you stifle the yearnings of a mother’s heart, always longing, with an inexpressible, an ever increasing, longing, after those most dear, those most holy, those most inseparable, ties of nature ? How can you yet live, live gaily and happily, estranged from those precious children, alien from their tender embraces, forbidden to name them, unknown to them, to their sweet, endearing, and lovely affection ? How could you sever yourself from the hapless cherubs, who actually came hand in hand from heaven, as a double claim on your maternal care and duty ? How could you close your heart to their little pleading eyes ? how could you close your ears to their faint, feeble voices ? how could you unclasp your hands from their tiny yet constraining grasp ? And oh ! how could you suffer their pure kisses to be swept from your lips by the hot breath of infamy ? Still, still on mine rests the memory of the exquisite fragrance of that one first kiss I impressed on their soft yielding lips when, in all the fluttering pride of a young coy mother, you took the new-born from your bosom, and presented them to me, perfumed with its chaste nourishment.

“ ‘ Emily ! Emily ! there was no one moment throughout the whole course of our wedded and impassioned bliss equal to that, when, turning from your eloquent and animated face to the placid slumbering ones of our calmly reposing infants, I felt

that I was not only a husband but also a father ! And now what am I ? a wretch, a being so bowed down by misery that death, annihilation, would be mercy ! A thing so abject, so unmanly, so abashed by the weakness which he yet cannot overcome, that he is obliged to steal in the hush of midnight, when every human eye is closed in sleep, to gaze upon the form still enshrined in his devoted hert, as if he were committing some monstrous crime, at the discovery of which humanity itself must revolt, and brand him with ignominy and shame. And yet you, you, Emily, who have wrought all this ruin, who have plunged me into the lowest depths of self-abasement, can sleep without remorse, and awaken without repentance, can find in new scenes, new ties, solace for dear old violated duties, dear old uprooted remembrances, dear old love-hallowed scenes ! What anodyne has vice to thus lull the senses in oblivion ? What reward has vice to bestow in compensation for the mighty sacrifices it compels ? Would that I could forget ! would that I could be as indifferent to the past ! would that I were dead ! ' And then, Agnes, I saw him stretch forth his trembling arms once more towards that picture, as if to embrace it for the last time, and then fall sobbing on the floor, weeping in as utter agony as you are doing now.

" How I shook with emotion, with sympathy, with horror, at witnessing the passion of his soul ! How I longed to rush from my place of concealment, to fling myself beside him, to raise up his grief-bowed head, to shed tears over that pallid face, to mourn with him, to speak comfort to him, and become the sharer, the confidant of his sorrows, to lighten their intolerable burden by commiserating them ! But I dared not : he was my father, and I respected the woe which only the more appeared to exalt and ennable his nature. I feared to violate the sacred privacy of his anguish, to enter, as it were, unbidden, and almost by violence, into the dark and secret chambers of despair, and expose the yet green and festering wounds of his heart to the smarting of the blast of cold, undutiful curiosity ; so I crept back as noiselessly to my room as I had approached that of our stricken father's. But I was no longer the same ; I had lost, and for ever, every vestige of former thoughtlessness, former buoyancy ; I had on the instant, become a man, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief—grief in its most heart-rending, most appalling form—the grief of a husband, made wretched by a wife's shame,—the grief of a father, made still more wretched by a mother's disgrace,—your mother and mine !

" How rapidly did I retrace every circumstance of our infancy, our childhood ! the gloom and depression of our father ; the silence, blent with pity, of the domestics ; the dullness and

monotony of our existence ; the mystery involving the past ; the apathy regarding the future ; the total want of interest in every worldly concern, invariably evinced by our moody and dejected father ; all, all rushed impetuously over my harassed and excited brain with such an overwhelming force that I was obliged to clasp my two hands tightly over my throbbing brow, to retain my fast-receding senses. And all this ruin, this desolation, this blighting of happiness, this maddening of reason, was occasioned by the creature whose fair, serene face is actually beaming on us, through the horrible pall that overshadows it like the cere-cloth of the grave ! ”

“ Oh, Ernest ! oh, my brother ! what a horrible scene to witness ! what a horrible tale to tell ! Our poor father to suffer so much ! our kind, gentle, considerate father ! How much more shall I love him now ! how much more earnestly shall I pray for him ! how much more dutiful, obedient, watchful, and tender I shall endeavour to be for the future ! I am almost glad I never saw my mother’s picture : its very beauty might awaken a morbid commiseration, a morbid palliation, for her errors. Now I can only blame.”

“ Glad you have not seen that face, that surpassingly beautiful face ? O Agnes ! you have no idea how fascinating, how winning it is. See it I must and will again, to impress every perfect feature on this racked and frenzied brain, that I may remember well when I encounter that living, breathing, beautiful, guilty mother ; for meet her face to face I will, if life and reason are only spared to me, and ere long, too, for I must know her, must speak to her, must for once feel the warmth of her embrace revive the perishing flowers of this blighted and withered heart.

“ Oh ! once to touch her hand ! oh ! once to hear her voice, the voice whose harmony reverberates throughout the universe, would be a memory for the whole of existence, a divine hymn, melody, to bear to the grave, to heaven. Oh Agnes ! oh my sister ! do you not long to behold that mother ? have you never longed to place those innocent lips close to her ear, to whisper in it some sweet girlish wish, and have it granted, with a blessing and a kiss ? Have you never longed to feel yourself drawn to a mother’s bosom with that exquisite compulsion, as if it would be pleasure too indescribable for words to paint, to grow to it ? Have you never dreamt” —

“ Yes, oh yes ! many, many times, my brother, have I, in some lovely dream, heard that mother blessing her child — felt her soft, warm kiss — her hotter tears — her convulsive grasp ; seen her angelic face bending over me ; such a face — ”

“ Like this ! like this ! ” exclaimed the impetuous boy,

snatching aside the curtain with a desperate force ; "like this, Agnes. Oh, look upon it well. Is it not an excuse for our father's regret, our father's adoration, our father's *forgiveness*. Look on it, my sister ; do not turn away, do not screen your eyes with that cold, trembling hand ; do not shudder to gaze on the innocent semblance of our mother ; that cannot harm you, that cannot shock you.

"Oh, what happiness it would have been for us to have had such a fair, sweet mother, to watch over us, to caress us, to instruct us, to share with us our every joy, to sooth us in our every sorrow. Sorrow ! could we have known any sorrow then, with such a beautiful mother ?"

"Ernest, I cannot think of her beauty ; I can but think of her ingratitude ; I can but think of the heartless selfishness which could abandon our hapless infancy. What is beauty without sentiment—integrity—honour—affection and piety ? The only *hearing* from you what it has caused our poor father to suffer is sufficient to make me despise and abhor it ; but, had *I*, like *you*, *witnessed* his tears of anguish and regret, I should have been too exasperated against the object who occasioned them, to look with common patience on that picture, much less find it an excuse for his despair.

"You are an enthusiast, Ernest, and, consequently, invest the beautiful with a goodness which it sometimes is far from possessing. Recollect, the sun, which calls forth the rose and the lily into fragrant being, also fosters the noxious aconite, the envenomed adder, and the deadly miasma. I know my father's worth and virtue, hence my love and veneration for him, but my mother is too culpable for me to admire even her picture ; would that it represented the dead ! would that it were as of an angel's, then might we gaze on it without fear, without shame, without remorse ; then might we come with our father, and standing before it, as in the presence of beatified purity, hear him descant on the virtues of our mother, weeping for our bereavement ; but instantly drying our tears, when he, with a triumphant smile, pointing to the skies, should say, 'Weep not, poor orphans, weep not, your mother is *there* ; her piety, her benignity, obtained for her an early entrance into paradise ; imitate them, if you ever hope to rejoin her ; she is waiting for us, my precious babes ; she is watching for us ; she is pleading for us, and we shall all be reunited and happy yet.' But now, but now, instead of that sweet song of resignation, whose echoes would resound in heaven, for seraphs to iterate, the harp of the heart is hung on the willow-tree of sorrow ; its strings are mute, its harmony is silenced by the ruder discord of the storm-blast of guilt. We may not mention that mother

to *him*, nor he to *us* ; there is a seal worse than death's upon our lips ; a seal that may not be broken, the seal of shame, which closes the father's and the children's lips from giving utterance to the outpourings of reciprocal sympathy, for the dead *wife* and *mother*. Well may he abandon himself to despair. To *us* the task belongs to mitigate that despair ; let *us*, then, make it our *sole* duty."

" You may, you can, Agnes ; but I have another, a more imperative one to fulfil. Not that I love my father less than yourself, not that I commiserate his sorrow less ; still I must leave him, and leave him clandestinely."

" Who ? you ! you leave our father, Ernest."

" Yes, Agnes, yes ; but only for a short time. You will console him for my absence ; you will keep alive his affection for me, should it wane, my sister ; you will not betray the reason of my departure."

" What is that reason ?"

" To see our mother ; to upbraid her ; to paint to her in vivid colours the wrong she has done us ; to adjure her to repent, to fly from the seductions of the world ; to return to virtue ; to take the plague-spot of turpitude from the brows of her injured and unoffending children."

" What a wild, what a boyish scheme !"

" I have sworn to execute it, and I will redeem my oath."

" She will scorn your efforts, and her contempt will drive you to desperation, Ernest. One so sunk in crime—"

" No, my sister, no, she is not entirely lost. Our father is a truly upright and righteous-minded man ; he never would so bewail the dereliction of one whose mere personal charms awakened regret, if he did not know for a certainty that the seeds of latent virtue still existed in the heart which has so grievously erred. Oh, if I can reawaken them to their pristine innocence ! oh, if I can induce her to reform ! oh, if I can convince her, that the next thing after virtue, most acceptable to God, is repentance, what a glorious mission I now undertake !"

" It is glorious, most glorious ; but how, alas, is it to be accomplished ? You do not even know, perhaps, where that mother is to be found—her name—her pursuits."

" I do, I do ; I know all ! She is one of the most popular singers of the day. Kings have courted her smiles, and queens have not disdained to clasp rich jewels on her arm. The decorum of age was allured from its propriety by the magic of her voice ; and youth, mad with the enthusiasm its dulcet tones excited, forgetful of its high station, harnessed itself to her carriage, as it were a car of triumph to draw the Goddess of Beauty to the flower-wreathed temple of love."

"Her very crime has been forgotten in the enchantment of her fascinations, and white-handed Chastity has applauded the faithless wife."

"But how do you know all this?"

"From public report; from the agitation of our father. Only yesterday, Agnes, it was pitiable to behold his anxiety for the arrival of the newspaper, which was, as you know, rather delayed on the road; and when at last it was announced, was brought in, I saw his hand quiver as he opened it; I saw his eye dilate as he searched for some particular passage; I saw his lips gasp, and his cheeks turn to an ashy whiteness, as he fixed his glaring gaze on the words he actually devoured; words which appeared to burn his very eye-balls. And then I saw the sudden start, like a man unexpectedly shot—the fierce clutching of the hand—the flooding tears, large as drops from a thunder-cloud—the frantic dash which hurled the paper from him, as if it were an envenomed snake—and then, that hopeless, almost reproachful casting up of the eyes, and the rush from the room, which told the bursting heart must seek for solitude to ease its choking anguish. I saw all this, and then, with the avidity of a famished tiger darting on its prey, I seized the fatal paper, and thrusting it far, far into my bosom, hurried away deep into the wood, to gloat over its contents. I found the paragraph I sought, instantly, for a large tear had fallen on it, and blistered many of the words."

"There I read a glowing account of the whole of our mother's brilliant continental career; how, at the *Academie de Musique*, at Paris, *la Scala*, at Milan, *la Fenice*, at Venice, she had created an absolute *furore*; how the new Opera House at Berlin was nightly crowded to suffocation, to hear the English siren; its ponderous walls trembling with the thundering reverberations of the tumultuous applause lavished on her; how the house was beset where she resided, people waiting patiently for hours, nay days, to catch a passing glimpse of her, ready to fling themselves under the wheels of her carriage when she did appear, to be immolated, (like the miserable devotees of superstition, beneath the Juggernaut-car of some senseless idol) as she was drawn along by the mad students, those wild *Burscheus*, whose frantic shouts excited the populace to the highest pitch of rapture. And how, Agnes, she was to appear, *literally* appear in London, the day after to-morrow; how every place was taken, the prices raised, and still there was a demand for more room; but crowded as that vast theatre will be, poor, insignificant, young as I am, I will be *there*, and in such a part too, that I will both see and hear our mother, and compel her to *see*, if not *hear* me."

"And do you hope, do you imagine for one moment, my poor deluded brother, to produce any salutary effect by your presence? Do you conceive it possible to convince a creature, so intoxicated by the adulation you describe, of the guilty course she is pursuing? Do you fancy it probable that you can enlighten the reason, obscured by the incense of flattery, rising, like a thick smoke on the altar of vanity and pride, to dim the lambent, but feebler ray of conviction? No, my brother, no! her hour is not yet come. Leave her for a while. If you are to be the instrument to work her reformation, which the Almighty may please to employ, your success, believe me, will depend on purer motives than those you meditate. It is not by being disobedient to one parent, that you can expect—that you *dare* expect—to benefit another. Abandon, then, the scheme, at least for the present."

"What! and suffer our mother to remain in her sin, now that I know it? Never! for who would be the criminal then? My sister, *I* could not allow these eyelids to close in slumber, conscious that her's were kept from tranquil rest by the orgies of vice, if *you* could."

"My brother, what a bitter, what an unmerited taunt! Go, in the name of heaven, but how can you go? Where have you the means? You do not know the cost."

"I have thought of all—calculated all—provided for all. I have been saving up every farthing for years for this; debarring myself of every gratification—been chidden by my father for parsimony unbecoming my youth—reproached by you for my want of charity; but the motive consoled me for all, it was to rescue a mother that I denied myself all else, closed my heart against every other appeal, counting up my hidden store with more than a miser's pleasure, for his accumulations were never hoarded for so divine a purpose. Oh! Agnes, think of me on that eventful night, pray for me; remember that these eyes will be fixed on our mother, these ears will be drinking in the sounds of our mother's voice, this heart will be fainting, even unto death, at our mother's praise, this cheek will be deep dyed with the glow of our mother's hardened shame. Think of all this, and when you lay your tearful cheek on our father's bosom, and feel his thin hand fondling those beautiful curls, while he endeavours to console you for the sorrow which he yet cannot comprehend, and then, between wonder and anger, marvel at my unaccountable absence, look up into his face with those serene eyes, and clasping his hand with deprecating tenderness, draw closer to him, and say, 'My father, God has called Ernest away for a work of signal redemption!' Oh! my sister, will you do this?"

"My precious, precious brother, I will ! I will do all that affection *can* ; you may rely on it. But, Ernest, promise me, in return, if I do thus much for you, if I keep our father from indignation, if I make him more and more love you for this heroic determination, promise me that when you have touched the right chord in our mother's heart—when you have awakened her to a sense of her enormity—when she longs to repent—when she can spurn all the glitter that seduced, and see only the alloy of guilt remaining from the pure gold of virtue and innocence—then, then, my brother, speak of me, speak of our father, send for us both, let us rejoice with you, that the stray lamb is gathered to the fold again. Let us partake of the felicity of the angels, who joy, indeed, over the sinner that truly and earnestly repenteth.

"Go forth, as a warrior girded for battle ! Go, for you have a fight, a conquest to achieve. Go,—and may God give you the victory !"

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## CHAPTER II.

"O wretched woman ! gaudy in the price  
Of gems, which blazon thy own proper vice !  
Sackcloth upon thy frame, and on thy head  
The sacred ashes of the martyred dead  
Would thee become, as an example, better.  
Oh ! thou art now, as 'luminated letter,  
Which Ignorance, the while it runs, may read ;  
Then, imitating the forbidden deed,  
Thy own soul damning, plungest into crime,  
Which thou must answer for, and not to time,  
But to eternity."

IT was on the evening of the first "Drawing-room" held after the solemn pause, which the conventionally-strict observance of Lent affords to the votaries of fashion in this pleasure-loving country,—the rest of the soul to the more seriously disposed, so necessary to remind even the highly-favoured ones of earth that this is not the sole world for which they were created,—that, almost bewildered by the tumultuous excitement occasioned by the *debut* of a *prima donna assoluta*, such as Madame Bellaire was universally acknowledged to be, Ernest Winstanley might be seen endeavouring to make his way to the Box entrance of Her Majesty's Theatre.

Footmen, with their long sticks ; coachmen, with their myriad capes ; and policemen, with their threatening staves, all impeded his progress, forming, as they did, a lane for the more commodious passage of the plumed and jewelled ladies, thronging that most aristocratic and unique place of amusement.

Not one single human being, however, of that vast multitude appeared to know or notice the tall youth with the pale cheeks and dark, luminous eyes, who was so intently threading the mazes of that brilliantly-lighted vestibule, which held with ease the enormous mass of eager creatures, nor that he ultimately seated himself far, far back in one of the stage-boxes, alone. Had he been observed, it must have been with wonder that, on such a night, he could be alone—could afford to be alone, the most outrageous sums having been paid for boxes on that especial evening. He had given a most extravagant price for his, the savings of a life, but he had said—*sworn*, that he would, for it was to see his mother.

What to him, was all the factitious splendour by which he was then surrounded ? what to him, the revival of those decorations, those exquisite pictorial ornaments, which had taxed the utmost skill and taste of this truly refined and luxurious age ?—the dancing girls of Etruria, or those classic groups, the birth of the Greek mind, when art was a worship in Greece ; and the numerous Italian arabesques begot by Raphael, on the lifeless imagings of the Arabian painters ?—he saw nothing of the gorgeous spectacle ; the immense area, with its sweeping circles of boxes, tier over tier, with their surfaces of delicate designs, and their lustrous draperies of *bouton d'or*, and, above all, their most fascinating array of distinguished occupants. He marked not the beauty and appropriateness of the proscenium, (with its Aurora of Guido,) how admirably it united with the circles of boxes, without interruption from column or pilasters up to the stage. Although he kept his eyes fixed on it, with an intentness perfectly harrowing, longing, until his very soul grew faint with anxiousness, for it to be drawn up, and reveal to those earnest, impassioned eyes, the form of his living mother, he almost fancied that his faculties were abating of their intensity ; that a benumbing sensation was deadening them ; that his sight was gradually growing dimmer, his hearing less acute ; so chilling, so interminable seemed the time to him while waiting for that mother's appearance. At length that curtain did begin to move ; he held his breath—he dared not look—he surely must lose his senses ; never was there such terrible emotion ; never did such a revulsion of feeling shake a mortal frame before. Could reason sustain such a shock ? could reason survive it ? Every fibre of his body seemed

tightened to an unnatural and torturing tension, every vein seemed swollen even to bursting, every joint quivered, as if just released from the dislocating rack ; he thought he must expire ; he thought he must rush from the house, or be suffocated with the hysterical choking in his throat. And, unable to endure the struggle, he started up, turned his back to the stage, then sunk on his knees and buried his head in the cushion of the seat, to shut out sight, hearing, consciousness —all, all.

It was a relief to him to know, from the apathy of the spectators, that his mother had not yet appeared, as it gave him time to collect his scattered thoughts, to compose his feelings, to form his plans ; and he calmed down by degrees, so as to be able to pay some little attention to the opera, "*La Sonnambula* ;" the impersonation of "*Amina*" being the character in which Madame Bellaire most excelled ; its simplicity agreeing marvelously well with her artless and still girlish style of beauty ; beauty which riveted, artlessness which enchanted every beholder,—so angelic—so pure—so apparently truthful. Ernest was aroused to the fullest conviction of its surpassing power—its almost divine influence over the minds of others, when, on the entrance of "*Amina*," the whole compact mass of human beings arose simultaneously, greeting her with the most vociferous, the most tumultuous welcome, ere she had uttered one note of that delicious *care compagne* ; while hats and handkerchiefs were seen on all sides, tossing about like the white surges cresting the dark waves of a storm-churned ocean. What homage to beauty ! what adoration of talent ! what worship of melody ! But could he credit his eyes ? Was that young thing, trembling and blushing before that admiring audience, really his mother ? Yes, yes, the fac-simile of the portrait of his secret, most entire thoughts, stood at that moment in his very presence ; still as beautiful, still as artless. O my God ! what a mother to lose ! From that instant he became completely oblivious to his own identity, absorbed in the touching history of the innocent village maiden ; thrilling with ecstasy at the exquisite burst of melody in her joyously warbled "*Sovra il sen la man mi posa* ;" her execution of it being, indeed, prodigal of vocal beauties ; leaping from octave to octave, with an ease at once startling and delightful ; following her every movement—seeing, hearing only the simple, the unaffected *Amina*, rejoicing with her in her happy betrot als, sympathizing with her "*Sposi ! oh tenesa parola !*" and was ready to rush by her side to vindicate her from the jealous suspicions of *Elvino*, when she so pathetically and vainly appealed to him in that tender, "*Elvino ! E me tu lasci senza un tenero addio ?*" scarcely being able to endure himself, as the shadows of suspicion darkened around her ; as

she unconsciously, although irrefragably, afforded reasons for those suspicions ; as he beheld her more and more involve herself in the fatal labyrinth, the perspiration broke over his flushed face, his eyes started almost from their sockets, and his lips parted, as if about to warn her of the danger, the ruin she was plunging into. But this was all illusion—dangerously intoxicating illusion. *He* it was who was dreaming, *he* it was who must awake ; and awake he did, at last, to a full and horrible sense of the reality, by that awful appeal, "*Nume amico all'innocenza, siela tu la verita,*" by his mother, his guilty, *guilty* mother,—his almost impious mother ! Oh, what can mean that sudden start—that piercing shriek—that death-like pallor—that fainting insensibility, just when, in the full flush of vanity, she daintily bends that graceful form, to gather up the fragrant, the magnificent bouquet flung at her feet, perfumed with the breath of royalty ; the ovation of Royalty to Genius ? Is it over excitement—fatigue—timidity ? No, no, no ; it is conscience—remorse—horror—*instinct* ; for in that youthful figure projected from the stage-box, in those large dark eyes glaring on her with frightful intensity, in the very arms stretched towards her, as if to strain her to his wildly-throbbing breast, she recognized her son, the son she abandoned in infancy, the son she never thought to behold again, never thought of at all ;—the son she believed would be brought up in profound ignorance of her very existence ; the son whose glances she durst not meet, the son whose reproaches she durst not hear. Oh, how handsome, how intelligent ! how nobly had he progressed towards manhood, the manhood she had disgraced for him ere he had attained it. Oh ! how like his father ; his adoring, his injured, his basely-betrayed father, when he first poured out his soul's wealth of love, with a prodigality that knows no stint. How did the present vanish — how did thought speed back to the past ! She was no actress now, she was by the side of her sleeping babes, taking that last look ere she fled, while they, perhaps, were dreaming of her ; well might she start, turn pale, shriek, and fall fainting on the floor, as she thought, with more than the rapidity of the lightning's flash, of all this !

Whilst his mother was being borne off the stage, in a state of utter, yet, for her, most happy unconsciousness, the object of universal tenderness and commiseration ; Ernest, almost as insensible, staggered out of the theatre to recover from *his* faintness, *his* anguish, by inhaling the cooling and refreshing air at the open door, unobserved and unpitied. Thus, too frequently is compassion lavished on the vicious and undeserving, to the detriment of real suffering.

When he felt revived, he re-entered the house, to ascertain from the box-keeper his mother's address, resolved to have an

interview with her as early as possible on the following morning, being most anxious to relieve his poor sister from the painful suspense in which he knew she then must be, on his account. He found that she was residing in an elegant mansion at the west end, not far from the hotel where he was himself temporarily staying. After learning the exact number of the Square, he hastened home to bed, but not to sleep; to hope to sleep was out of the question, with a mind distracted by such various and contradictory emotions.

The image of the beautiful, the artless Amina, still pursued him; her voice still thrilled on his ear—re-echoed in his heart; her grace, her innocence, her loveliness, still haunted his imagination; her apparent horror of vice, her agony at only being suspected of it, her ingenuous defence of herself, her rapture at being once more considered pure by her lover, passed through his brain like the lights and shadows of a phantasmagoria, or the wanderings of delirium; and but for the certainty of his not being asleep, he would have imagined that he was really under the influence of a dream; that his mother's guilt was a dream; his father's anguish was a dream; his own shame, mortification,—distress and flight was a dream. But, no—oh, no! the only illusion, the only artifice, the only dream, was in the consummate skill, the consummate audacity, the consummate wickedness of the criminal woman in so deceiving, by her impersonation, of innocence—in her having the confidence, the courage, the callousness, to perform a part, every sentence of which must have sounded like her own condemnation, had she possessed one remaining atom of sensibility, one atom of conscience, one atom of regret for the virtue she had sacrificed. Or was it possible for her to have attained to that perfection of dissimulation, that while the heart *was* torn with acute remorse, the countenance should still maintain the serenity of almost impassible indifference? God knows—God only knows—but a few hours, a very few hours would reveal the truth.

Her start of horror, her piercing shriek, her veiling of the eyes, as if to exclude some awful vision, her fainting—all, all would seem as if she were not quite dead to feeling, as if she might yet be brought to a sense of her degraded situation, as if she might be yet rescued from it.

O, my God! if ever thou heardest the heart-wrung prayer of a son, imploring thy aid to assist and strengthen him in his resolution to save a mother, thou hearest it *now*, benignant Father of mercy!

## CHAPTER III.

"Je ne vous parle point de mes peines, et pourtant elles ne sont pas faibles. Ah ! si vous saviez ce qu'est le malheur d'être aux pieds d'une mère qu'on ne peut estimer, de porter l'affliction au sein de celle qui nous donna la vie, de ne trouver aucune parole pour la consoler, et enfin de se sentir coupable pour trop aimer la vertu, vous verriez peut-être que les douleurs de l'amour ne sont pas les plus cuisantes."—AMELIE MANSFIELD.

As soon as daylight began to dawn, Ernest quitted his sleepless pillow, dressed himself, and hastened to his mother's house. But, alas ! not one sign of animation did it evince ; the *death* of slumber still hung over its inhabitants ; not a shutter was open, not a blind withdrawn, not a particle of smoke issued from one of the chimnies,—the want of movement, the want of life was painful to behold ; it seemed as if the very pile of brick and mortar was petrified to silence, paralyzed to inaction,—and he turned away with disappointment, almost disgust, from the external apathy, so totally at variance with the feverish excitement of his own energetic feelings.

Nothing evidently remained for him to do, under such circumstances, but to return at once to the hotel, or pace up and down that Square, until the servants, at least, had risen. Such, however, was the ardour of his impatience to see his mother, that he could not endure the thought of leaving the vicinity of her abode even for a moment. It was something to be so near her, to observe the house she inhabited, to conjecture which could be the room she slept in, to marvel how she *could* sleep, with her son, her wretched son, hovering around her. Perhaps, like him, she had not slept ; perhaps, like him, she had spent the weary and woful night in reviewing the past,—how much bitterer for her, heightened as it was by the torture of self-condemnation,—perhaps, like him, she was longing for the time when they might meet ; perhaps, like him, she was *dreading* the time when they might meet.

At length, one by one, those white shutters, with their delicate gilt mouldings, were folded back like the leaves of a water-lily, to admit the sun into its very bosom ; the windows were flung open, and the now active housemaid was seen busily arranging the elegant apartments.

Ernest approached one of the windows, and inquired "when

it was probable that Madame Bellaire would be visible?" On being told "not for some hours to come," he was nearly driven to despair, thinking he never should be able to wait so long; but time speeds on imperceptibly, even while the hopeful or the miserable are blaming the tardiness of its progress; and, after a brisk walk, Ernest was actually surprised to hear it strike ten o'clock; when, returning with alacrity to his mother's residence, and on inquiring of the page, who answered his ring at the door, "whether he could see his mistress," he was instantly ushered into the breakfast-room, with a respectful intimation, "that if he would be seated, his lady should be instantly informed that a stranger was waiting for an interview."

How curiously sensitive, how morbidly tenacious is the human heart! the word *stranger*, inadvertently uttered by the domestic, grated harshly on the ear of Ernest, and fell repellingly on his bosom, "Yes, I am a *stranger* to my mother,—as strangers then let us meet, or let intuition alone inform her that I am her son."

He therefore requested the rather astonished servant "not to say he was there, that he wished to surprise Madame Bellaire, and that if she knew he was in the house, it would destroy the effect." In fact, he did want to see the result of his sudden and unexpected presence on his mother, to judge by the emotion it produced the real state of her mind.

The page at first hesitated to comply with a desire wrapped in so much mystery, but his suspicions were soon dissipated by the earnest and simple manner of the dejected youth, indeed, far too truthful, far too ingenuous to cloke design or villainy; he, therefore, instantly withdrew with the most perfect confidence.

At first, the sole idea of meeting his mother occupied every thought of the agitated Ernest; but as she still delayed to appear, he gradually became sensible of external objects, and could not help being struck with the gorgeousness of the furniture, and the splendour of the fittings of the room. Everything that art, taste, and luxury could heap together with the most lavish hand of reckless profusion, surrounded him; and for the moment he was dazzled by the glittering walls, the brocaded draperies, the yielding carpet, with its groups of flowers, fresh almost to fragrancy; but recollecting the purport of his visit—to whom it was intended, he shrank with a shudder from the too-glaring marks of the careless ease and prodigal extravagance of his mother's mode of life.

On a table, in the centre of the room, was a superb Sevres breakfast-service, for two persons only. "Had she then expected him, prepared for his coming? could she believe it

possible that he would come? or for whom else was that second cup and saucer?"

He was interrupted in these agonizing and most truly heart-wringing reflections by the abrupt entrance of his mother.

Guided alone by the beautiful impulse of natural affection, they sprang mutually forward with extended arms, as if to embrace each other; but, as if restrained by a secret shame, as if repelled by a secret horror, they suddenly stopped, their arms fell listlessly by their sides, and, with an irrepressible cry of anguish, they turned away, and sank into opposite chairs, even without one common salutation, one simple word of greeting, silent, both silent, mute with sorrow and remorse.

At length Ernest ventured to look at his mother, to examine her, as it were. How changed from the brilliant creature of the preceding evening! yes, how changed! A night of sleeplessness, a night of deep musing, a night of stern, uncompromising self-examination, had indeed changed her—inconceivably, awfully changed her; and he could no longer recognise in the abashed and trembling being before him, with her red and swollen eyes, her pallid cheeks, and yet more pallid lips, the bright, the radiant Amina sparkling with triumph, flushed with pride, glowing with vanity. Now he beheld his mother as she really was, stricken, careworn, miserable, oppressed. She shrank from this scrutiny; she seemed to divine his thoughts, to guess his horror and repugnance; and, as if to divert his attention, or as fearing to increase his too evident detestation, she arose with a desperate energy, and, ringing the bell, ordered the servant, who promptly obeyed the summons, "On no account to admit any one; that she insisted upon being uninterrupted; that she would not be intruded upon."

"Then she did expect some one, and not me," mentally ejaculated the poor boy; "oh, my lost, lost mother!" This little incident quite changed the current of his feelings, quite chilled the commiseration which his mother's altered appearance had awakened in his heart; and, remembering only her guilt, and the disgrace it had entailed on him, he exclaimed, in a tone of undisguised disgust, as he cast his eyes around, "What barefaced splendour! what wilful luxury! Truly vice is at its ease here. You seem to have everything you can possibly desire."

"Everything but peace of mind; but wanting that, I am poor beyond all imagination. Oh that conscience would but once say to this worn and tortured spirit, as the blessed Saviour once said to his sorrowful apostles, 'My peace I leave with you!' But how dare I hope it? How dare I hope for peace, guilty as I am? Do I indeed deserve peace? They were

innocent; but I—but I! O my son! I dare not proceed. Spare your mother, and judge her silence mercifully."

"I do! I do! God knows I do!"

"Ernest," she continued, encouraged by this outburst of genuine feeling, yet in a voice so faint, so faltering, as scarcely to sound above a whisper, "this interview, so trying, so torturing for us both, will be beyond our strength, is already beyond our strength, for you look exhausted to death, and my soul is sick within me. Will you then break your fast with your mother? will you condescend to eat beneath this roof? O my son! think how much I must have fallen in my own esteem, when I address you thus, when I expect a refusal."

"Mother, had you earned the bread you offer solely by the talents you possess, it would have been sweet indeed to your son; but, profusely as such talent is rewarded by this generous and refined age, its resources never could furnish the boundless expenditure I behold here. Hence, with loathing and abhorrence, I refuse your proffered hospitality; for, were I starving, I would not prolong this blasted existence at the price of a mother's guilt!"

"O my son!" exclaimed the wretched woman, falling back into the chair from which he had risen, as if to approach the breakfast table. "Oh my son!" she repeated in a tone of yet more harrowing dejection; "how can you be so inexorable? Have you no pity, no mercy, no humanity for your mother?"

"What pity, what mercy, what humanity had that mother for the hapless babes she snatched from the bosom nature designed to pillow their young heads, dried up its sources of nourishment, abandoning them to perish or find sustenance from the breast of the hireling? Why, a tigress would have had more tenderness for her offspring, more regard, than the civilised, the accomplished, the delicately reared human mother, who did not pause one poor instant in her fell and direful purpose, but fled, heartlessly fled, to enjoy happiness, without regret and without remorse poisoning its impure delights, for all the evil that atrocious flight brought upon others! For, up to this hour, you were happy, you could be happy, forgetful, insensible, obdurate, suffering the noisy shouts of public applause to drown the still, small voice of self-reproach. You could, after the dissipations of a vicious day, lie down and take your rest, and rise up on the morrow, refreshed in renewed beauty, strengthened for new triumphs. You could do all this—you, the guilty one—retaining all your charms, your gaiety, your talent, with a perfection truly marvellous; while the innocent victims of that guilt, worn to a shadow, prematurely old, strangers to cheerfulness, indifferent to display, careless to cultivate the

gifts bestowed on them by heaven, dragged on a miserable existence from day to day, longing for the night, which yet brought no rest, and for the morn, which yet brought no peace. O thou Almighty God ! where is thy equity if this be permitted ? Pardon—pardon ! for retribution is still thine ; for hast thou not said, ‘The wicked flourish but for a season ?’ Hast thou not said, ‘ Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb ?’ Thou hast said this, oh, Lord, and thou wilt surely abide by thy word.”

“ And, do you wish me to perish thus ? could you rejoice at your mother’s death ?”

“ I could rejoice to know that my mother had repented of her former trespasses ; had obtained forgiveness for them, and was beyond the reach of further temptation—that temptation so easily yielded to, so easily embraced : for, I do not think the self-love, so ready to flatter our errors, so ready to gloss over our vices, could offer you one excuse—one extenuation, to palliate the enormity of your offence.

“ You can neither plead poverty nor unkindness in mitigation of the crime into which you so recklessly plunged. Elevated by marriage to a position far beyond the ambition of your wildest, your most aspiring imagination could conceive ; the sole object of an impassioned, faithful, and idolizing heart : and to crown all, to enchain you, to fetter you, as it were, to love wedded to virtue ; God sent you two as fair babes, as ever mother’s enraptured eye gazed on ; but you forsook all—virtue, splendour, love, duty, religion, and even hope. You abandoned character, name, station, all, all, casting a shade over the path of those your presence could alone brighten ; casting a sadness over the souls of those your gladness could alone enliven. But what mattered that to you—”

“ Ernest—sir ! do you suppose my patience has no limits ? do you suppose that every sentiment of pride and resentment is stifled in my bosom ? Have I, indeed, sinned so heinously, that I must bear such language without complaint from you ? Was it only to upbraid me—to load me with opprobrium, that you sought me thus ? that you came hither, unlooked for, unhoped for, uncalled for ? Have you forgotten all sense of duty ?”

“ Duty, I was never taught it—who was to teach the forsaken ones duty ? You were gone, and, mourning your loss, our poor father thought not of the imperative claims we had yet on his heart ; he forgot us for you, and we were left to grow up wild and untrained, like the parasite of South America : owing en-

tirely to Nature all the beauty we might possess: how then can you expect duty from me, or my sister?"

"I do not, Ernest; the thought was rash—the hope, alas! far, far more rash still. Yet, do not goad me quite to desperation, my son; tell me what I shall do, tell me what you wish me to do, but tell me gently and soothingly, I implore. What *shall* I do, oh my son?"

"Quit this house, withdraw from the world, hide in penitence and sorrow the guilty head, lofty yet in the arrogance of turpitude."

"What do you ask, what do you require? Oh, Ernest, young and spotless as you are, you cannot picture that to quit such a life as mine has been of late, is attended with yet some sacrifice; for, what can I hope in exchange for that which I leave? not your society, not the society of your pure sister, not the love and esteem of your most ill-treated father, scarce the esteem of my own mind, scarce the approbation of my own conscience."

"Hush! my mother! alas! it's as I feared, it's as my sister feared, she said you would prefer a life of vice."

"Who? she, my daughter? oh! I cannot sink lower now!"

"Yes, my mother, you can; my dear mother, you can infinitely, incredibly lower, by continuing your present career, now that you know the awful horror of it, by continuing to submit to be the sometime valued, the sometime despised companion of one who could always stifle your reproaches, always deride your anguish, mock and scorn your sorrow, taunt your shame, ridicule your contrition; for he knows what you quitted without hesitation, what profligacy you willingly consented to; he knows you absolutely, entirely, most *despisefully*, for he made you what you are."

"He did! he did! a wretch, a very wretch; still, ere now, such a mother has been snatched as a brand from the burning, by the hand of the son whom she had disgraced, who yet remembering that she *was* his mother, could forgive and pity."

"So I do—so I would if I thought to redeem you by so pathetic a remembrance; by a filial compassion so tender, so holy. What brought me here? what enabled me to surmount all the obstacles which impeded the great, the God-like object I had in view? the object which I yet hope to accomplish—that of leading you from the error of your ways! far from every scene of former vice—of former triumph. Oh, fear not my implacability; oh, refuse not my love and devotion; from henceforth, every hour of this life shall be yours if you will but accept the conditions I offer—offer for your soul's sake. See me at your feet, abjuring you to save yourself. Mother! will you, can you yet pause? oh, let me lead you from hence—let my love compensate

for all ; for you I will give up the whole world, study only your comfort, study to make you forget the past, study to cancel its horrible recollection for ever, study to cast the impenetrable veil of oblivion over your mind, so that you might not be ashamed to meet my gaze, nor mine quail beneath yours. Come, my mother, let us fly at once, let us live only for each other, let us seek some spot, where, secure from intrusion, safe from the curious eye of malice, we may not fear the slow finger of scorn to point at you as a thing of guilt, nor to me as the base associate of crime. Come, come ; I long to realize this happiness, this innocence."

"Alas ! alas ! it is not for us—it is not for me to realize it. There is no such lull for the tempest-tossed soul ; there is no spot on earth so remote, as not to be found by the spirit of that retribution which still pursues crime, which the light of conscience will not illumine, to reveal to the universe the turpitude which God sets up as a warning for innocence, to mark with trembling—and virtue to observe with tears of charity. Even now I feel how retributive is every act of heaven ; for, oh, my son ! whilst arming you with the mercy which would save, its iron enters into the soul, that dreads, lest your efforts should be in vain, lest you spend your strength for nought ; for Ernest, I am too, too lost to be reclaimed."

"God of mercy forbid !"

"From what a dream have you awakened me, from what a delirium have you aroused me ! Oh, my son, I see the precipice on which I am standing—my footsteps are gliding down its slippery sides—my head is whirring—my brain is dizzy—my eyeballs are burning—snatch me from its awful brink ! save me from my own desperation."

"Now have I found my mother !" exclaimed Ernest, vehemently, as he clasped his mother to his bosom ; "Agnes, my sister, now I have found your mother ; father, my father, now have I found your wife."

"Let me die ; oh, let me die now oh, God ! for never shall I hear more divine words—never feel more contrite—never more willing to go. Oh, my son, the good of this embrace, the medicine it affords my diseased soul. Clasp me closer, my precious boy—closer still, that as I expire, for die I feel I must in this tumult of delight, I may yet fancy those encircling arms are those of the angel sent to bear me to the throne of heavenly grace."

Overcome by these contending emotions, her senses completely forsook her ; her head sank heavily on his shoulder—her form became rigid—her cheek pale—her hand cold—and Ernest thought that she was actually dead.

Laying her on the sofa with the tenderest care, he rang the bell in a state of distraction, ordered the bewildered servant to fetch the nearest physician immediately, "for that he had killed his mother;" then he flung himself on his knees beside her, chafed her temples, kissed her icy lips, her hands, lifted up her head, and pressed it again and again to his bosom, shedding a torrent of tears over the pallid face of his now most idolized mother; calling upon her by the most endearing names—entreating her pardon for his cruelty, his impetuosity, his barbarity, protesting that he would not survive her death, that he could not survive it, for that he dared never more face his aggrieved father with the added weight of a mother's murder on his soul.

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## CHAPTER IV.

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of the perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart?"

MACBETH.

DOCTOR MARLOWE, on his arrival, finding the patient whom he had been called on so suddenly to attend, in a high state of excitement, accompanied with a considerable degree of fever, advised that she should be conveyed to bed immediately, when he would prescribe the necessary remedies.

"Not here, not here!" exclaimed Ernest, "not *here*, doctor, I implore!"

"Why not here, sir?—is not the lady at home?"

"No, oh! no. But allow me the favour of a few moments' private conversation; when I will explain all."

Leaving the still unconscious sufferer to the care of a kind-hearted female servant, Ernest and the physician retired into an adjoining apartment, when, as soon as he could bring himself to speak on such a subject to an entire stranger, Ernest informed Doctor Marlowe who he was, the position of his mother, with the horror he felt at the idea of her remaining another instant under the polluted roof, which she had willingly consented to quit with him.

"But where, my dear sir, do you purpose removing her to?—Have you any friends in town?"

"Alas! no.—I thought of an hotel."

"That, I fear, is quite out of the question; and, for many reasons. In the first place, perfect quiet is imperatively essential for your mother's recovery, which cannot be expected in such a place; then, again, at this time in particular, just at the height of the season, the proprietors of fashionable hotels have a decided objection to receive invalids, as it is hard to convince other people, that there may be very serious indisposition, without infection; and alarm is so easily created. Under these peculiar circumstances, coupled with the risk which your mother would undoubtedly run, by the fatigue of removal, in her present critical state, I think you had better consent to her remaining where she is, and send for your family."

"What!—Send for my father, to meet, perhaps, the villain who seduced his wife? What!—Send for my innocent sister, to breathe the air tainted with a mother's crimes? Never! never! O, sir! you do not know what you ask; you do not know what we have suffered!"

"I can guess, but too well guess; for I am no stranger to the misery such deviations from rectitude occasion, having witnessed, too, too often, their desolating ruin. Pardon me,—command me; anything I can do as a friend, anything my wife can do,—believe in our readiness, our delight, at being thought worthy of your confidence."

"Thank you, thank you; but I need only your assistance:—I can watch, I can nurse my mother; all I dread is, lest by remaining in this house, I should encounter one who makes my blood boil even to think of. If I did, I cannot answer for the consequences; I am young,—a mere boy, in fact,—but there is sometimes a preternatural strength granted by heaven, to the feeble and powerless, to resent injuries; and, O God! who ought to be more endowed with it than myself, for who has been more deeply wronged?"

"I will see that you are not so annoyed, so insulted; I take upon myself to secure you from any such distressing rencontres; I have authority, in such extreme cases, for my profession furnishes me with the means of banishing all that is hurtful or injurious to my patients or their friends. Our art is to soothe, not alarm; so, do not fear, either for your mother, or yourself, from that cause, I beg. Now let us return to the poor lady, and try what medicine, aided by filial affection, can do for her. These violent shocks of the nervous system are more difficult to manage, are attended frequently with more danger, than is, at first, imagined; however, we will do our best, and leave the result, as we ever must, to the Great Physician above."

On re-entering the breakfast-room, they found Mrs. Win-

stanley, for such will we now call her, completely recovered from her insensibility ; but still exceedingly feverish and excited. On seeing her son approach, she burst into a passionate flood of tears, and concealed her face in agony with her hands, as if to avoid his gaze.

“ My mother, my dearest mother, you must not give way to such excessive emotion, you must endeavour to be more composed ; your very life—my life—depends on it ; pray, pray then, for my sake, if not for your own, keep your mind as tranquil as you possibly can.”

“ My dear, blessed, forgiving boy. Oh ! I do not deserve this kindness. Leave me, Ernest, leave me to die as I merit, unregretted and unwept.”

“ Leave you, my mother, not while I have life, not while I have consciousness, not while you prize my presence, not while it contributes to your happiness. But do as Doctor Marlowe wishes, go to bed at once, and then I will take my place at your pillow, as chief nurse.”

It was evident, from the hopelessly despairing, lifting up of the hands and eyes to heaven, as she retired in silence to comply with her son’s request, how much she was affected by his tenderness—how much it wrung her conscience-stricken heart.

As soon as she was in bed, Doctor Marlowe administered a rather potent soporific draught, desiring the room to be kept perfectly still ; with strict injunctions that the patient was, on no account, to be disturbed ; when, having many other important engagements, he took his leave, with a promise of an early call in the afternoon.

Ernest, after his departure, and when he had been persuaded by the servants in attendance to swallow a cup of coffee, took a seat close to the bedside, drawing a small writing-table near him, taking the precaution to screen himself behind the folds of the rich damask curtain ; when, dismissing the domestics, with a promise to ring for any assistance he might require from them, he sat down to watch the effects of the draught, to hope that it would prove beneficial.

How painful, how varicous, how torturing were his reflections, as he listened to the laboured breathings of his mother, as he caught her stifled sobs—her low moanings—her faintly-murmured prayer ! He knew that her poor face was buried in the pillow, which she was deluging with her tears, and he longed to lift it up, to lay it on his bosom ; he longed to speak peace to her, to console her ; but for her sake he refrained even from good words.

Suddenly she started up, and, flinging back the curtain, exclaimed, “ Where is my son ?—where is my Ernest ?”

"Here! dear mother, here!" he replied, rising hastily, and laying her head gently on the pillow again: "here! do not fear that I shall ever leave you, unless you wish it—unless you command me to go."

"I send you away? Oh, my son! But, Ernest, you never told me how you came—who desired you to come. Your father, your sister—would they, did they care to send you to the outcast—the lost—the degraded—Oh! if I thought they did; if I could only think they did."

"You shall know all, you shall indeed, my dear, *dear* mother; but not now, you are not well enough—you must not talk—you must not even listen, you must keep yourself perfectly quiet: if you do not consent to do that, I must resign the task of nursing you to a menial, and think what such a compulsion will cost us both."

"Oh! I could not survive your absence now: I will do all you wish—I will not speak: but pray do not close the curtain, it cannot hurt me to *look* at you."

"No; but the light will prevent your sleeping, and sleep you must, if you wish to get better."

"I do not wish it, I do not hope it; all I hope is, to die forgiven by those I have injured on earth, forgiven by God in heaven."

Ernest did not endeavour to combat this despondency; he thought it even more salutary than if his poor mother had evinced a stronger, a more earnest desire to live.

Bending over her, then, with silent, but inexpressible tenderness, he imprinted a fervent kiss on her lips, smoothed the ruffled pillow, pressed her hand softly, as if it were a new-born infant's, drew the curtain even closer round the bed, and, after standing for some time to listen, he had the satisfaction of knowing, by her breathing, that his mother was at last in a profound slumber.

Re-seating himself, he commenced a long letter to his sister, giving her a plain, unvarnished account of all that had transpired since their separation, with the present imminent danger of their mother, entreating her to break the information to their father with the utmost caution; and concluded by begging her to write without losing one post, telling him how his father bore the dreadful intelligence.

After some hours of uninterrupted sleep, Mrs. Winstanley awoke; but, from her confused and incoherent manner, the wildness of her eyes, the flushed and heated appearance of her cheeks, and her burning hands, Ernest apprehended that the draught had not produced the tranquillizing effects which Doctor Marlowe had anticipated.

She wished to rise, to dress, to go to the theatre; and it was with the greatest difficulty that she could be kept in bed.

She seemed to have forgotten Ernest, to wonder who he could be; and asked, in an imperious tone,—“Why the room was not arranged—why her toilette was not prepared—her jewels displayed—and why Lord Orville was not present at it, as usual?” insisting that he should be fetched, for that she could not dress without his selecting what she should wear.

“She is mad! she is mad!” exclaimed Ernest; “she is mad—my poor, poor mother! Oh! that Doctor Marlowe could but see her in this deplorable state! Run, run,” he continued, to the servants, who had rushed into the room in consternation, at the violent ringing of the bell, and were crowding round the bed, gazing on the wretched maniac; “run, without losing a moment, some of you, and inform the doctor of this awful paroxysm.”

At that instant he was announced; and Ernest saw by his countenance that he, too, was seriously disappointed at the unfavourable result of his prescription;—that he, too, considered his mother in great danger.

These suspicions were painfully confirmed by Doctor Marlowe proposing to remain, and watch himself the effects of a different soothing draught, that, in case that failed, he might be on the spot to order other remedies.

All that terrible night did the miserable son, in the presence of that almost stranger, have to listen to the ravings of his distracted mother, as she recapitulated scene after scene of her former life. Now, as the innocent girl, sought by the ardent and honourable lover; now, as the wife and mother, revelling in the pure delights of domestic felicity; and now, as the horizon grew darker, as the coils of seduction were being woven around her, stealing from the clear, candid eye of confidence, to drink in the deadly poison of that intoxication which corrupts and destroys for ever.

How did he writhe beneath the racking details of that alluring, that monstrous scheme laid for her destruction, until, from the glorious height of excellence, she toppled down into the abyss below, when her very talents were made subservient to the wretch’s prodigality; her very beauty bartered to supply means for his gambling propensities!

At length she ceased to speak; oh! the *relief* of that silence. At length the morning dawned: another morning, after another night of awful, tedious watching, for its cheering light. At length the day came on, in the full busy tide of anxious bustle, and confused and clashing interests; and at length the poor boy caught the welcome sound of the postman’s knock, as he went

from door to door, and he hoped there might be a letter for him. Oh ! if only one line from home, it would so comfort and encourage him ; but there was none. Agnes had not answered his letter by return of post ; how could she be so unkind, after his earnest entreaties ?

Every hour his mother appeared to be getting worse ; the fever evidently baffled all Dr. Marlowe's efforts to subdue it. The most copious bleeding scarcely abating the throbbing pulse, shaking that slight frame with a fearful violence.

Ernest was terrified at the responsibility of such a charge, he felt almost accountable for his mother's life, he felt as if he had brought her thus suddenly to the brink of the grave ; for a few hours before, she certainly was perfectly well to all appearance. "It is my rashness, my folly, my cruelty, which has endangered a life, which might, but for that, have been spared for better things. O my mother, forgive me ! O my father when you hear of this, do not curse your unhappy son ! O my sister, when all is over, past recall, do not upbraid me with the murder of your mother !" Towards the evening, and after a day of intolerable anguish to poor Ernest, and the anxious doctor, ere either could prevent it, Mrs. Winstanley bounded out of bed, exclaiming, "Where am I ? what has been the matter ? have I been ill ? I must have been ill ; but I am better now, quite, quite well ! my head is charmingly light. Come, Annette, come and dress me, quick ! I shall be too late !" Then fancying that she was actually before a crowded audience, she curtsied in the most graceful manner, then sang, with astonishing power and brilliancy, "*Come per me sereno.*" "Oh !" she continued, rambling as if in a dream, rushing forward as if to save it, "that bouquet will most certainly fall into the pit—that beautiful bouquet ! it is from the royal box too ! No, oh ! triumph—no, see ! see ! 'tis mine ! Ha ! that face ! those eyes ! my son ! save me ! catch me—I fall ! I faint," and as almost fainting from this unnatural exertion, Ernest caught her in his arms, endeavouring, with Dr. Marlowe's assistance, to convey her again to bed ; she said, as she struggled to break from them, still warbling, as if in the opera, "*Dove son ? chi siete voi ? Ah, mio bene !*" and she flung her arms round the neck of her son, and strained him rapturously to her bosom, bursting out into that most glorious, that most triumphant "*Ah, non giunge uman pensiero.*"

"Mother ! mother ! you wish to break my heart ! you wish to kill your son."

"Son—*my* son ; who says I have a son ?"

"You have a dear, fond, dutiful son," answered Dr. Marlowe, tenderly. "O madam, would, for his sake, you could be more composed."

"Then it is not a dream ; I have seen my Ernest ! I have *felt* his kiss ! O sir ! I am not mad now. I am perfectly conscious, would that I were not. I remember all now, how the poor boy sought me at the theatre—sought me here ; how he embraced me—wept over me—forgave me. I see him now with his pardoning, beautiful eyes ; I hear him now, with his soft, merciful voice, *almost* praying for me."

"Quite, *quite*, my beloved mother. I am praying for you now ; I shall never cease to pray for you until you are well."

"Well ! I shall never be well again."

"Yes you will, if you only keep yourself calm. Doctor Marlowe assures me of it."

"Then he has deceived you. He knows that it is impossible for a mind so down-borne with guilt to be calm ; but *does* he know how guilty I have been ? does he know that the patient, which filial affection summoned him to save, has been a monster of depravity ? a wretch who abandoned every claim to virtue, violated every hallowed tie, forsook a husband, whom God, indeed, made only a little lower than the angels, and children as fair as the angels themselves ? does he know that they all still live, live in forgetfulness of me, in loathing of my name ; live in the hope that my remembrance will, ere long, be blotted from the face of this earth, to enable them to raise their faces once more to the gaze of their fellow-men ? No, no, no, he does not, he *cannot* know all this, or he never would have dared to speak of calmness, of health, of life for me. But I forgive him, for he did not intend a falsehood, for who would not have been equally misled ? who would not have been equally deceived by appearances ! He saw only a woman, surrounded by luxury ; vain-glorious in the *prestige* of universal celebrity ;—the admired—the envied—the flattered—the idolized—the triumphant : he saw not the faithless wife, the neglectful mother, in the prostrate being before him ; he did not lift up one rose-leaf of the false-seeming to mark the serpent of remorse, coiling round the heart's core, eating and eating, like the slow canker worm, that destroys the beauty of vitality ere one outward sign of destruction becomes visible."

Exhausted at last by the torrent of pathetic self-reproach, which both the doctor and Ernest had in vain endeavoured to check, she sank back on the pillow, pale, faint, almost expiring.

At this moment sounds of unusual tumult, on the outside of the chamber, caught the ears of the anxious watchers. Someone seemed to be forcing his way in, whilst others appeared to be expostulating with him on the violence of his conduct.

Both Dr. Marlowe and Ernest concluded that, despite their prohibition, the man they dreaded more than any other to

behold, was actually struggling to appear in the presence of his dying victim.

Ernest darted to the door to prevent his entrance—the handle turned—it opened, and to his surprise, almost horror, admitted—his father.

“Where is she? where is my wife, my Emily!” he cried, rushing towards the bed; “she is not dead,—she could not die without the assurance of my love—my forgiveness.”

“Oh, no, no, no! I *could* not, my husband,” she exclaimed, falling into his extended arms; “but now, O Lord, take me to thyself.”

“O Emily, Emily! how do we meet again! oh! my wife, to think this is the end of all!”

“How much happier for me, than any I could expect. O my husband, wherefore should you lament it? wherefore should you wish me to live? wherefore should our children wish it? what could I be still but an alien to you all? now, death, drawing a veil over human frailties, while penitence, blotting out my transgressions, you may think of my memory with pity, you may speak of me with sorrow, you may pray for me without fear, and without shame.”

You, my Edward, and our children! *children*, I see but one: where is my other child—my girl—my daughter? Would she not deign to look once on a living mother’s guilty face? would she not deign to shed the angel light of her pure presence once round this guilty bed?”

“I am here, mother!” said Agnes, coming forward; “I feared to agitate you more; I am here, for my father wished it.”

“Then you would not have come to me if your father had not wished it? yet your brother came voluntarily. Oh, my God, she loves me not!”

“Emily, do not feel so poignantly: my dear, *dear* wife, let me entreat. It is not from want of affection—from any coldness, but Agnes is more timid, she is not so impulsive—so enthusiastic as her brother.”

“I ought to rejoice that she is not; I ought to rejoice that her inflexibility will save her, perhaps, from sorrow and shame. Oh, had I but possessed the same; oh, had I but been blessed with more stability of mind—had I not been so easily swayed to evil, how differently would events have been shaped for us all now!”

I dare not blame you, I dare not reflect on your blind indulgence, your blind idolatry; but oh, my husband, my dear, precious husband! when you made me your wife; when you took me from an humble station—had you only been content with the gifts of nature, had you only been satisfied with the

simplicity which first fascinated you ; instead of cultivating those gifts—instead of exposing them to the garish day ; instead of glorying in their development, glorying in the too rapid progress ; I alas made ; instead of enhancing them—of feeding my vanity with the sweet food of adulation—of worshipping instead of correcting—of endeavouring to subdue the proud swellings of my heart ; instead of ministering to its unhallowed arrogance, in misleading instead of guiding, I might not have erred—I might have remained virtuous. But God only knows ! still, if men would but remember, that when they wed from humble life, and afterwards endeavour to accomplish their wives, that it is not for themselves, but the world : that with every newly acquired grace, is alas ! also kindled a love of display, a thirst for general admiration, a longing for a wider scope to exercise the talents which so enchant and delight ; for it is lamentably true, that that which renders a woman most attractive in the opinion of others, renders her the least so for home ; that education does not consist in accomplishments, but in learning the unostentatious duties of a wife and mother ; which they too often cause to be felt as tame, irksome, and uninteresting. I see all this, now that it is too, too late ; and deplore the innocent ignorance from which you, although in love, so fatally aroused me ; and I fear me, you see it, you feel it too, my most beloved, now, now, that it is, alas, too late to repair the ill."

"I do ! I do ! God is my judge, I do ; and may he forgive me for the unintentional, although most grievous error then committed by me, in the abounding love of a doating and devoted heart.

"But, Emily, if you only recover, all may yet be well."

"Impossible, impossible ; but I shall not recover, so sadly to test your forgiveness. My heart is growing feebler every instant, its pulses have throbbed themselves to rest, and it was time.

"I am grateful, most grateful that I did not die in frantic impenitence ; I am grateful that the Almighty has sped you all hither, to remove the *sting* of death, leaving me only the *victory* over the grave.

"Go now for a time, you want refreshment, you want rest, you do not know the fatigue and anxiety yet before you. This poor boy in particular ; see how pale, how jaded he looks ; he has never left me one single instant, Edward, not one ; and may God bless him for his most kind, most soothing attention. Take him away now, or he will be ill, and then you will have another calamity to deplore ; another pang to blame me for. That dear innocent girl too, this is no scene for her to witness. Go,

go then, my beloved ones, pray, if you love me; I wish to be left alone with Doctor Marlowe; I wish to ask him those questions which are of paramount importance for me to know; yet, which would only needlessly wring your hearts to hear; I promise to send for you all, should I find myself growing worse."

Doctor Marlowe strongly seconded this request; asserting, that he considered it would be decidedly beneficial to his patient to grant it, or any other she might express, in her present precarious state.

Influenced alone by the consideration of its being of advantage to her, Mr. Winstanley and Ernest retired to a room below to converse in private over the mournful events which had so unexpectedly assembled them under the roof which they never, but a short time before, could think of without horror.

Agnes preferred going to lie down; but that was only to have the privilege of uninterrupted thought; to review the late strange and harrowing scene, to search into the depths of her own bosom; to catechise her feelings; to probe into their most secret recesses, and to discover, if possible, why she was almost apathetic, why she was less enthusiastic than her brother—if the being enthusiastic, meant a palliation for crime, Agnes acknowledged that she certainly merited the charge. For, reflect on her mother's deviation in whichever light she would, still it only presented the dark side of that sin, for which she was now about to pay the fearful penalty.

Even when viewed through the medium of youth, which is ever so lenient—through the medium of piety which is ever so charitable; still, still, she could find no shadow of excuse for it. A stranger equally to passion and vice, she could not by any possibility, comprehend where was the temptation. She could not understand where was one even temporal advantage to be gained by the awful lapse from rectitude, which her unfortunate mother had committed. "Had she been ambitious of splendour, where could she expect to find more, than her own elegant and most luxurious home afforded? Did she desire affection; where, oh! where could she hope to meet with more fervent, more enduring love, than that which had been so prodigally lavished on her, when she was the very queen of that deserted home? Did she even covet authority; where could she demand it so imperatively, so undisputedly, as from those her rank, her virtues rendered dependant on her gracious will? Now she was obliged to solicit as a favour, from the menials around her, that which before she could claim as her lawful right, that which it was their bounden duty to offer her.

No, no, no ; Ernest might forgive—he did forgive ; but he never could excuse an offence so unpardonable in the sight of God and man. She might forgive—she did forgive ; her father might forgive—did he not, oh ! did he not forgive ; but could he excuse—could he palliate the base ingratitude—the heartless desertion ; could he forget the years of wretchedness, the tears, the anguish, the despair which that desertion had cost him ! no, surely he never could, how much soever he might even pray so to do.

Mysterious, unaccountable, unreasonable as her mother's conduct appeared to the artless Agnes, attended as it evidently was, with the sacrifice of all, which even the merest worldling prizes ; independently of the more serious, the more important loss it involves ; still, alas ! Mrs. Winstanley's was no solitary instance—no individual case ; for where is the misguided woman who ever derived even the remotest temporal benefit from such a step ? one she could afterwards think of without perfect agony ? without owning to her own soul, that the wages of sin is death ? Should she be taken from poverty, want and rags, to be “clothed in purple and fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day ;” she soon becomes accustomed to the rich satins, the sparkling gems, for which she bartered the brighter jewels of chastity and happiness ; she soon learns to look upon them only as the decorations of vice—the price of infamy—the badges of shame. Dainties equally soon pall upon her appetite ; she is soon satiated with luxuries ; for, the mind, sick with the incurable disease of self-condemnation, loathes the food which only gives strength to the frame, to furnish a more enduring power to misery. And, oh ! should she be allured from ease and comfort ; should she be aware, that what she is sacrificing can never be compensated ; and yet be unable to resist taking the fatal plunge down the dire abyss, whose slippery bottom affords no solid foundation for the weary and wandering steps of vice ; she is still even more utterly wrecked, more forlorn and destitute, more absolutely wretched—dependent alone, for even the partial happiness she can now enjoy, on the fleeting passion for which she has given up so much ; with feelings acutely sensitive and jealous of the power she exercises over the fell destroyer of her peace ; the influence she really yet retains : watching with a vigilance, at once humiliating and alienating his every look, word, and action : eternally suspicious and full of upbraiding, where no wrong is intended, no unkindness offered ; but, conscious that she merits his contempt ; conscious that she has no claim on his regard or respect, save that which latent honour, or fruitless pity may dictate ; yet perpetually struggling to establish a firmer, a more permanent hold

on the heart she fears may escape her, she knows will escape her, whenever fickleness or caprice should lend the faintest colour of apology for perfidy. She spends every hour of her existence a prey to tormenting apprehensions; distracting and antagonistic emotions; deprived of the possibility of tasting unalloyed the few brief and doubtful pleasures of the present; from that very dread of the future, which doth indeed, inevitably overwhelm the daughters of error; that of being ultimately despised and forsaken by those who have wrought their ruin. Hence, every innocent girl is an object of alarm, as a no distant rival; every virtuous woman, an object of detestation as a reproach—nothing convinces her—nothing satisfies her; protestations avail not—tears avail not—prayers avail not; for the certainty that she has forfeited all that makes woman lovely, loveable, and of good report, renders her incredulous—destroys the faith of the heart, and causes her to disbelieve that truth is still on the earth; that truth can be still on the earth where man hath made his habitation; for with him can falsehood and duplicity alone dwell! Thus, she lives a blank; a blank even to herself, as well as the world; neither instructing by her precept nor example; and when she dies, her death is felt equally as a relief by those whom her crime injured; and by him for whom she committed it. No tears dare be shed over her bier—no lamentations dare arise from the hearts which survive her—no stone dares record the virtues she no longer possessed. Silently is she consigned to the grave, silently is her spirit yielded up to God—silently the angels lead it to the throne of mercy: when, if she, in her inmost soul, ever did bewail her transgressions, it is there declared—it is there accepted as an atonement.

#### CHAPTER V.

"I fear to die. And were it in my power,  
By suffering of the keenest racking pains,  
To keep upon me still these weeds of nature,  
I could such things endure, that thou would'st marvel,  
And cross thyself, to see such coward bravery."

JOANNA BAILLIE'S "RAYNER."

As soon as Mrs Winstanley found herself alone with Doctor Marlowe, she sat up in the bed, beckoned him to her, and in a firm and decisive tone of voice, addressed him thus:—"Doctor, I sent those poor things away, less from anxiety on their ac-

count, than terror on my own. I see you start almost with disgust, at that confession ; but I will no longer disguise my true sentiments, I will no longer glaze over facts, however hideous revealing them may make me appear ; I will be candid, henceforth, although at the expence of the most profound vanity that ever swelled a human bosom,—I will, at last, show myself to others, that which I *know* I am,—selfish, deceitful, and unfeeling ; for, why should I study to cozen and deceive now ?—the veil has been rent from my heart, by unwary frenzy, and it is exposed to view in all its naked and revolting deformity.—Even to you, I am fully aware that I seem a very monster of atrocity, to have acted as I have, to have wronged the noblest, the most generous of mankind, to have disgraced the loveliest, the most promising children ; and pity for them, kindling a just indignation in your heart, excludes the commonest commiseration for me, the commonest excuse : *you* could not pardon me ; how, then, can I expect the *Almighty*?"

"Madam, I implore you not to associate me with a Being so sacred and august ; not to compare an erring and finite fellow-creature's limited extent of mercy and compassion, to the Infinite Redeemer's, whose pardon, whose mercy, are as illimitable as they are divine."

"True as that may be, true as that undoubtedly is, still it will not reassure a guilty soul, trembling on the brink of eternity, too soon to meet the incensed Judge, who has been far too much outraged, to do aught save condemn. Tell me, then, at once, without delicacy, and without subterfuge, what you really think of my condition ? tell me, as you hope for mercy hereafter, whether you consider I am in any immediate danger ? do not hesitate to declare the truth ; do not fear that I have not fortitude to hear it ! I abjure you, then, in the name of all that is most solemn, to inform me of the real state of my health ? I abjure you, as a man and a Christian."

"As a *Christian*, then, I will confess, that as far as human judgment can decide, which is ever but too capable of error, I do fear that you are in considerable danger."

"How do you mean ?"

"Why, that unless a very marked and extraordinary change takes place for the better —"

"What ! what ! may I expect ? speak ! speak !"

"Madam, I dare not proceed ; this very excitement alone will be fatal to you : you must endeavour to be calm, your very life depends on trying to compose the nerves."

"How can I be calm, how can you hope that I can be calm, when, without preparation, without deliberation, you have the astonishing barbarity to tell me that I shall die,—that, in fact,

my days are numbered?—I will not, I cannot, I dare not believe you.—How can you, indeed, even with all your professional knowledge—professional experience, so nicely weigh the precious span yet allotted to me?—No! no! it is a trick to alarm me, to keep me quiet: *quiet!*—why, the bare idea makes every pulse in my body run riot!"

"Then you will not even try to be calm? if you do not, I must decline the responsibility of attending on you any longer. I have no wish to give you unnecessary alarm or pain, heaven forbid, I could be so wantonly cruel; but, I repeat, that unless, in the course of the day, the fever subsides, we may dread the worst; and, in such acute inflammation of the vessels of the brain, as that you are now suffering from, a change for the better, alas, too rarely occurs. Remember, I can have no interest to discourage you, quite the contrary; as HOPE is always the best remedy we can administer; but, where the immortal soul is of more consequence than the mortal body, I study never to raise false hopes. Besides, you led me on by your seeming resignation, your apparent willingness to die."

"Willingness to die!" almost shrieked the prostrated and wretched creature, stifling her convulsive sobs; and clasping the doctor's hand between her own—willingness to die! Oh! do you not know; can you not discriminate between the desire of prolonging a blighted existence, an existence such as mine; and the dread of death—the dread of meeting beyond the grave—that punishment which knows no alleviation, no cessation; which is as enduring, as it is tormenting? Can you not understand the horror of standing face to face, before the God who has been neglected for years? Will he, can he overlook that neglect? Will he, can he pardon such an impious wretch? No, no, you dare not hold out the faintest promise of forgiveness to a creature, who must die in the full flush of her iniquity—who must meet the terrible one, clothed in the lightnings of destruction. You have no authority for such a promise of mercy."

"I have! I have! would you but listen! I have God's own promise,—I am now authorised by Him. Oh! look on me then as heaven's delegate, humble as I am, and be saved. Listen, listen! God is addressing you,—calling to you, from the blessed realms of salvation: hear! 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'"

"But, I have not time for repentance, for contrition, for humiliation; my heart is RENT, but, it is not yet CONTRITE; it has not yet renounced all worldly feeling, all worldly regret—it is

yet, I fear, more anxious to obtain my husband's pardon, than the Lord's; it is not **ALL** laid bleeding as a sacrifice on his altar; and He will not accept a part. It is impossible for me then to hope for mercy."

"Nothing is impossible with God; nothing is denied to repentance, when sought through prayer."

"Bring back my children then,—bring back my husband—bring back the innocent to pray for me; for I am not worthy to appeal to God myself. But stop! stop! she exclaimed, with the most frightful energy; observing him ready to obey her, "I have still something to arrange in secret with you; something they must never know—never guess. You are benevolent, your countenance, your manner, convince me that you are—your very profession must render you so, if it is not innate,—let me then entreat you, by that benevolence, not to deny, perhaps, the dying request of a miserable criminal, who wishes, by its fulfilment to atone, although partially, for her great transgressions. Doctor, you see that ebony casket, bring it to me; it contains letters, you must destroy, jewels, you must dispose of."

O Doctor! inthose flattering words you will read the record of my shame, and marvel how little persuasion it took to allure me from right; in those baubles you will behold the reward of my turpitude, and marvel how they could ever have been valued, being but the price of crime! Now I wish to offer them up as an oblation for sin, as a sacrifice acceptable to repentance, and you must dress the altar."

"But how?"

"By selling them—by endowing a lazarus-house, with the money they procure—by diving into the sinks of vice and suffering, and transporting to its kindly shelter the outcasts, the pariahs of the earth, to be restored, for virtue to re-adopt, or, won by piety, for Heaven to hail with gladness. Oh! if there only one tear should be dried—one pang mitigated—one distress relieved—one heart purified—one prayer of penitence awakened, it will have a sanctifying—a redeeming quality, beyond all, *all* ever hoped for, when those glittering gems were still counted of worth by me! How am I changed since then! how am I changed! Why, formerly, when decked in those costly jewels, every pulse through my entire frame palpitated with pride, I glowed and thrilled from head to foot, with the consciousness of being armed for fresh triumphs—fresh admiration. I gloried in my shame, and hugged the sparkling fetters which sin flung around me, and which did but blazon the disgrace to which I was then indifferent—which did but corrode the heart, whose festerings *now* only felt, add poignancy to my other torments. Take them away, remove them from my

sight for ever; my very hand grows chill with a shuddering horror at merely touching them. Oh pray, in mercy take them hence."

"But your daughter."

"My daughter! what, do you suppose for one instant, that I would blister the fair form of my daughter with them? The very association fills me with inexpressible dismay. No, Doctor Marlowe, no, there at least I am all the mother, and recoil with a holy modesty from the thought that even her eye should rest on such proofs of my disgrace and weakness, conscious that she must only despise me the more for being betrayed to active crime by such senseless inducements."

A cautious knocking at the door, with the sound of suppressed voices outside, apprised them of the return of the absent ones, and their anxiety to be re-admitted. Doctor Marlowe, indeed, had scarcely time to comply with the imploring look of his now completely exhausted patient, to conceal the casket, before the door was opened by Mr. Winstanley, who, followed softly by Ernest and Agnes, approached the invalid, saying in a subdued tone—"Is she asleep, Doctor? has she slept?"

"No, I regret to say—"

"Good heavens! what, not all these hours?"

"Hours, Edward; have you wished me to lose so much precious time in sleep *now*? I cannot afford it, my beloved. But you surely have not been hours away,—it did not appear so long to me."

"Did it not, dearest? thank God for that. I feared, if you had not slept, you might have found it tedious: but, perhaps, you have not been quite conscious."

"Oh, yes! yes! only too conscious. I could not sleep for thinking."

"But why should you think now, my Emily?"

"Why should I think now? I have never thought until *now*—there has been my sad omission."

"But, dear mamma," said Agnes, seating herself on the side of the bed, and bending fondly over her mother, "you must not think of any one thing until you are better—must she, Ernest? Promise me by this kiss;" and she flung her arms round her mother's neck, and kissed her most fervently.

This first, and most unaffected display of tenderness from her hitherto unyielding daughter, was quite too much rapture for the humbled and penitent mother, and suddenly covering her face with the bed-clothes, she burst into tears and sobbed aloud. It would have been impossible, even for the most indifferent spectator, to have witnessed such unfeigned anguish unmoved; what then must have been its effects on the devoted beings whose very lives seemed to hang upon her tranquillity?

It was in vain, however, that they entreated her to be calm—to consider how injurious such excessive grief was to her. The long pent-up strains of nature had at last given way, and fairly overflowed the breaking heart.

Doctor Marlowe expressed the most serious fears for the ulterior consequences of this emotion in her enfeebled state—and these fears, alas, were but too shortly verified by Mrs. Winstanley relapsing into more violent and uncontrollable delirium, from which she only recovered when on the brink of dissolution, just to implore to be raised up, to lay her head on her distracted husband's bosom —to embrace him and her children—to call upon the Lord of mercy—to bless them all—and to expire, even while their very prayers ascended to Heaven for her restoration.

On the morning succeeding their return home, after her melancholy and unostentatious funeral, Mr. Winstanley, taking his now really motherless children by the hand, led them silently and solemnly to the picture-gallery, where, to their great surprise, they beheld the prohibited portrait—*unveiled*.

Standing opposite to it for some moments, before he could so far master his emotion as to trust himself to speak, he gazed on it with a look of ineffable benignity blent with the deepest sorrow and tenderness. At length he said, although in a most faltering and ill-assured tone.—“ My children, I perceive your astonishment at beholding the picture of your mother uncovered. But there is now no occasion for concealment. *Repentance* hath withdrawn the curtain which enshrouded *Guilt*,—and from the dark shadows of the grave she breaks upon us in the refulgence of primal innocence—in the morning of unsullied loveliness. Look on her, then, without fear and without shame; she is worthy of your admiration—your love—your regret; look on her as she appears in that picture, for such *was* your mother, —such she has become *again*;—bestow on her, then, your purest thoughts—your chaste tears—your holiest prayers; for how dare we despise her over whom the angels above are now rejoicing—the saints above welcoming to paradise !”

To you, Ernest, in particular, I know, it must be especially grateful, to stand thus before your MOTHER's picture, while your FATHER clasps your hand, in forgiving and augmented affection —the father, whom, for that very mother, that very unknown mother, you did not hesitate to disobey—to abandon. Think not, however, my dear boy, that at this remote period, and after, too, all you have done and suffered, that I am going to launch out into upbraiding, that I am going ungenerously to wound the finest, the most sensitive impulses of man's nature—that of love for her to whom he owes his being. No, my Ernest, no! Reproof is lost in admiration; in veneration, for what you then

dared ; and in solemn joy of the success attending that god-like daring. But had the divine endeavour to win that erring mother to repentance, failed ; had she, after you discovered her, refused to listen to the voice of admonition ; had she defied the denunciations of impending wrath you were inspired to threaten her with, to awaken her to a sense of her enormity ; had she resolved, in fact, to continue her career of vice, despite your tears, entreaties, sacrifices—and, instead of giving her to heaven, as you have done, you had felt yourself reduced to the horrible alternative, of either sharing her infamy, or returning to the father whose despair you had aggravated by your disobedience. think, think how different would have been your position now. Remember then, for the future, my most beloved son, that even should you be actuated by the purest, the noblest motives, unattended by any opposing interests, as alas, in the present case, still the Almighty, doth not always deem fit, in his superior wisdom, to crown with success what we more shallow-sighted mortals hope He will. But, when those same motives, although apparently equally pure, equally noble, have yet to be effected through a dereliction of duty to one parent, for the sake of benefitting another ; it is almost presumptuous to expect the sanction of Him, in whose eyes the shadow of offence is unpardonable ; and whose unerring judgment cannot admit of the mundane sophism of doing evil that good may result from the same."

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## HOME OF THE HOUSELESS POOR, EDGWARE-ROAD.

BY C. E. NUGENT.

"Twas an eve of the month that has passed away,  
When drear Winter kept his lonely holyday,  
No sun had illumed the morn, and darkly now  
The sky o'erspread the cheerless world below,  
Hunger and hopeless want sped slowly by,  
Or feebly moaned their doom of misery.  
'Twas sad to see the busy crowd pass on,  
Or harshly bid the suppliant begone,  
No pitying look, no kindly word to cheer.  
Despairing shrank the homeless Wanderer.

All this I marked, when a voice soft whispering nigh,  
Bid me search out the home of outcast misery,

Where friendly tones do soothe heart-stricken grief,  
And friendly hands do minister relief,  
Bid sleep refresh the limbs, give strength again  
To tread the morn their pilgrimage of pain.

Though scant the alms, and frugal be the fare,  
Youth, Manhood, Age, are all collected there,  
On bended knees pray God may ever bless  
The homes of those who feel for their distress,  
That when there comes, as come there must, a day,  
When worldly wealth and honours pass away,  
When all we love, each well-remembered scene,  
Must fade away as they had never been,  
That Heaven may have for *all* bright joys in store,  
Last Home of the Rich, as well as "Houseless Poor."

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### THE BENEDICTINES OF ST. NICHOLAS.

THE monastery of St. Nicholas, the wealthiest in Catania, and whose cupola surpasses in height every other monument in the city, was erected about the middle of the last century, after the designs of Contini. The church and the garden are here the objects principally deserving of the traveller's notice : the church for its columns of *vert antique*, and for a very beautiful organ, the work of a Calabrian monk, who, for the sole recompense of his skill and ingenuity, demanded the privilege of being interred beneath his *chef d'œuvre*; the garden, for a vanquished difficulty; in reality, the bottom is lava, and every particle of soil which covers it has been borne thither by the hands of man.

The regulations of the monastery of St. Nicholas were formerly remarkably strict, and even severe; the monks were obliged to dwell upon Mount Etna, upon the limits of the habitable land; and for this purpose their first monastery was built at the entrance of the second region, three quarters of a league above Nicolosi, the last village which the traveller encounters on his ascent to the crater. But as all customs become weakened by time, these regulations, by degrees, lost a great portion of their severity, and they no longer cared about repairing the dilapidations caused by time and the wintry storms upon their dwelling. Soon the ceilings of some of the apartments having given way under the weight of two or three heavy falls of snow, the good fathers determined upon building the magnificent chapel of ease of Catania, which took the name of St. Nicholas the

New, using their former habitation, St. Nicholas the Old, or Elder, as a summer dwelling only. Later, St. Nicholas the Elder was abandoned, summer as well as winter; for three or four years they talked about having certain repairs made, which would render it once more in a habitable state, but they took good care not to carry their schemes into execution. At length, however, a band of robbers, gentlemen much easier satisfied on the score of accommodation than the monks, having taken possession of the place, and formally installed themselves there as the legitimate proprietors of the land, there was no longer any question about removing to St. Nicholas the Old, and the good fathers, by no means anxious to have any disputes with such tenants, abandoned to them the tranquil enjoyment of their convent.

This circumstance gave rise to a very curious mistake, well remembered to this day by the guides of the neighbourhood.

In 1806, the Count von Weder, a German of the *vieille roche*, as his name sufficiently indicates, departed from Vienna, in order to visit Sicily; he embarked at Trieste, landed at Ancona, visited Rome, remained there, as well as at Naples, a few days only, in order to obtain certain letters of recommendation and introduction, again took shipping, and finally disembarked at Catania.

The Count von Weder had long known of the existence of the monastery of St. Nicholas, and the reputation acquired by the holy fathers for possessing among their servants the best cook in Sicily was also familiar to him. Consequently the worthy *graff*, who was a very distinguished epicure, had not failed, when in Rome, to obtain from a cardinal, in whose company he had dined at the Austrian ambassador's, a letter of introduction to the Superior of the convent of St. Nicholas. The letter was most pressing; in it the cardinal recommended the Count as a pious and fervent pilgrim, and begged that the utmost hospitality should be shown him by the brotherhood, as long as he pleased to remain their guest.

The Count was a *savant* after the German fashion, that is to say, he had read in his time a vast quantity of very musty, and now perfectly forgotten books, so that he was enabled, in support of his assertions, however erroneous and extravagant they might be, to quote a certain number of unknown names, which invested his paradoxes with a sort of pedantic majesty. Among these musty tomes he had one day fallen in with a catalogue of all the Benedictine monasteries scattered over the surface of the globe, and he had seen and retained with the tenacity of a trans-Rhenish mind, that regulation of the St. Nicholas Benedictines which enjoined them, as I have already stated, to dwell upon the last limits of the *regione cultivata*, and the first of the *regione*

*nemorosa.* Consequently, when he hired a muleteer to guide him to St. Nicholas, and the man demanding if it was to St. Nicholas the New, or to St. Nicholas the Old, that he desired to go, the Count unhesitatingly replied: "*A San Nicolo su'll Etna.*" This sentence formed the worthy graft's entire stock of Italian.

Although the words were plain enough, and the direction precise, the muleteer ventured to hazard a few observations, but the Count closed his mouth by saying, "I will pay well." We all know the magic power of such an argument. The muleteer saluted his customer with the utmost respect, and half an hour afterwards, returned with his mules.

"Well," said the Count, "when shall we start?"

"When you please, Excellency."

And the two travellers forthwith set out upon their journey. They had not proceeded far, before the night began to close in; there was no moon, and consequently, they could scarcely distinguish four paces before them. But as the muleteer was well acquainted with the neighbourhood, they ran but little risk of losing their way. The guide took a narrow and scarcely defined path, which branched off at a right angle from the horse track which they had been hitherto pursuing; then, leaving behind them by degrees the cultivated region, they entered that of the forests. After about an hour's riding, they beheld rising before them, its form drawn darkly against the evening sky, a huge black mass of building, from the windows of which not a light was visible.

"There is St. Nicholas the Old," said the muleteer, in a low voice.

"Oh, oh!" replied the Count; "that is St. Nicholas, is it? A very melancholy situation for a convent, upon my life."

"If you wish," rejoined the guide, quickly, "we can return to Nicolosi, and if you do not like to sleep at the inn, I know an excellent man who will not refuse you a bed, Signor Gamel-laro."

"I don't know him; besides, it is to St. Nicholas I wish to go, not to Nicolosi," returned the Count, sharply.

"*Zerebello da tedesco,*" murmured the Sicilian.

Then flogging his mules, in five minutes more they were at the door of the convent.

To tell the truth, the appearance of the convent did not offer a more inviting aspect, on a closer inspection, than it had done when viewed at a distance. It was an old building of the twelfth century, in whose walls it was easy to read the various ravages caused by each eruption since its foundation. The date of every fire, and of each separate earthquake, were graven in indelible characters on its mossy and time-worn battlements. By certain

projecting buttresses which stood out in bold relief upon the deep, dark blue sky, now studded with myriads of stars, it was easy to discover that a portion of the fortifications had fallen into ruins. The walls, however, which surrounded the *é*ififice, appeared as if kept in a state of tolerable repair, and being pierced here and there with loop-holes, gave to St. Nicholas the Old the appearance of a fortress, rather than that of a quiet and respectable monastery.

The Count regarded all these signs with an air of great calmness, and ordered the muleteer to knock at the door. The latter, in obedience to these injunctions, seized hold of a rusty and time worn iron knocker, which had in all probability done duty in that situation ever since the erection of the building, and let it fall two or three times with all its weight upon the massive oaken door. A hollow sound reverberated through the innermost recesses of the convent, which was quickly replied to by the ringing of a bell. Almost at the same moment, a little window let into the wall at about ten feet from the ground was cautiously opened, and a long iron tube was from thence protruded in a point blank direction with the breast of the Count; at the same time a dark and bearded countenance showed itself at the opening, and a voice which possessed nothing of the monastic unction in its tones, demanded, "Who goes there?"

"A friend," replied the Count, quietly putting on one side the gun-barrel, "a friend."

At the same time he fancied that a very agreeable odour of cooking viands reached his nostrils through the open window.

"A friend, humph! a friend," said the man at the window; "and pray who is there that will prove to us that you are a friend, eh!"

And so saying, he again pointed his musket in the direction of the Count.

"My very dear brother," replied the Count, again putting aside with the utmost *sang froid*, the weapon that menaced him; my very dear brother, that you should use proper precautions before admitting strangers into your peaceable habitation, I can easily understand; I would do the same myself were I in your place; but allow me to inform you that I am the bearer of a letter from Cardinal Morosini to your general."

"To our captain," said the man with the gun.

"Eh! no, no: to your general."

"However, that is no part of the business. You are alone?" continued the interlocutor.

"Quite alone."

"Wait a little then, we will open the door directly."

"Humph!" muttered the German to himself, as he dis-

mounted from his mule ; "hump ! that roast smells deuced savoury."

"Excellency," demanded the muleteer, who during this colloquy had unloaded the Count's baggage, "you have I suppose no further need of me?"

"Will you not stay then?" replied the Count.

"No," said the muleteer: "with your permission I would rather sleep elsewhere to night."

"Very well, off with you then," said the Count.

"Shall I come for you again?" demanded the Sicilian.

"No, no, the general will take care of me."

"Very well, adieu, Excellency."

"Adieu."

At this moment the key began to turn in the rusty lock ; the guide jumped upon the back of one of his mules, took the bridle of the other in his hand, and departed at a good round trot ; he was already fifty paces off when the door rolled slowly back upon its hinges.

"That smells good," said the German, sniffing up the savoury odour that escaped from the kitchen ; "that smells very good."

"You think so?" demanded the strange porter.

"I am sure of it," replied the Count.

"It is our chief's supper, he is on his road hither, and we are expecting him every moment."

"Then I have just arrived in time," said the Count, laughing.

"You know our chief then?" demanded the porter.

"No, but I have a letter of introduction for him."

"Ah ! that is another thing. Let's see it."

"Here it is."

The porter took the letter and read :—

*"Al reverendissimo generale dei Benedettini al convento di San Nicolo di Catania."*

"Ah ! I understand now," said the porter.

"Ah ! you understand now, do you ? that's all right then," said the Count, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder. "In that case, my friend, if you understand, just have the goodness to carry in my luggage, and above all things take especial care of that portmanteau, my cash is there."

"Oh ! ho, your cash is there, is it ; that's a good thing to know," said the porter, shouldering the trunk in question with remarkable alacrity.

Then, having taken possession of the remainder of the Count's luggage : "Follow me, Excellency," he continued ; "I am now perfectly convinced that you are a friend ; come."

The Count did not require any further bidding, but followed his guide as he had been requested.

If the exterior aspect of the convent had appeared strange to

the Count, the interior was no less so. On all sides the walls seemed falling to decay; the passages were encumbered with empty wine casks; but what was more wonderful still, in a religious establishment, so renowned for its strict observance of all the outward forms of worship, not a crucifix, or holy image, was to be seen. The Count paused for a moment, for he was one of those talkers who have the bad habit of stopping when they speak: and he expressed his astonishment to his guide, at these evidences of desolation.

“What would you have?” replied his guide; “we are in a rather lonely situation, as you yourself must have perceived, and as the mountain swarms with a set of rascals, who fear neither God nor the devil, we do not wish to leave the little that we possess, lying about everywhere. All the precious objects belonging to the convent, are safe under lock and key in the cellars. Besides, you are aware, I suppose, that we have another monastery in the plain, near Catania?”

“No,” replied the Count, “I was not aware of that. Ah! so you have another monastery in the plain, eh! good, good.”

“And now, Excellency, examine your luggage yourself, in order that you can attest to the chief that nothing has been touched.”

“Oh! that’s easily done: a *malle*, a carpet bag and a portmanteau. But take care of the portmanteau, friend, my cash is there.”

“Three articles only, that is scarcely—”

“Quite sufficient, my friend.”

“Very well, wait here for a few minutes,” said the porter, showing the Count into a species of cell; “our chief will be back directly.” And he turned round, as if leaving the room.

“I say, my friend, said the Count, stopping his guide, “instead of waiting here till your chief returns, could I not go down into the kitchen, I might be able perhaps to give the cook some useful hints.”

“Faith,” said the porter, “I do not see why you should’nt. Just wait here for a moment until I put your luggage into some place of safety. I will return directly. By the bye, how much did you say you had in your portmanteau?”

“Three thousand, six hundred and twenty ducats.”

“Three thousand, six hundred and twenty ducats.” Good! replied the porter.

“That appears to me like a very honest fellow,” murmured the Count to himself, as he gazed after the retiring figure of the monk, who left the room laden with the worthy graff’s *robba*; “that man appears to me like a very honest fellow.”

Ten minutes afterwards, his guide returned.

"If you wish to descend to the kitchen, Excellency," said the Sicilian, "you are at liberty to do so."

"Yes, I wish it," answered the Count.

The Count followed anew the steps of his guide, who conducted him to the convent kitchen. The well-garnished spit was turning slowly round before a blazing fire, all the furnaces were lighted, and pots and saucerpans innumerable hissed and bubbled everywhere.

"Good!" said the German, emphatically, pausing upon the last step of the stairs, and casting a well satisfied glance over this succulent spectacle; "good, it appears that my olfactory organs were not deceived. Good day, cook, good day."

The cook having been advised beforehand as to the part he should play, received the Count, in consequence, with all the deference due to so distinguished an epicure. The Count, profiting by this courteous reception, took the liberty of raising the covers of the various stewpans, and tasting their several contents. All at once he darted upon the cook, who was about to put some salt into an omelette, and snatched from his hands the bowl containing the eggs.

"Good heavens, man!" cried the Count, "what are you about?"

"What am I about?" demanded the astonished cook.

"Yes; what are you about? I repeat."

"Putting salt into the omelette, to be sure."

"Why, benighted individual that you are, people don't put salt into omelettes. No; they put sugar and confitures; good confitures, do you understand?"

"Come, come, nonsense," returned the cook, endeavouring to regain possession of his bowl of eggs.

"No, no;" repeated the Count, "I will make the omelette; give me some confitures."

"Indeed!" said the cook,—beginning to wax wroth; "we'll soon see who is master here."

"I am," said a loud voice; "What is the matter?"

At these words the Count and his adversary turned round, and beheld the figure of a man, apparently of between forty and forty-five years of age, clad in a monk's gown, standing erect upon the staircase; he was of lofty stature, and possessed the stern and imperious features so frequently met with in those habituated to command.

"The captain!" exclaimed the cook.

"Ah!" said the Count, "it is the general; good day, general," he continued, advancing towards the monk, "I ask your pardon, forgive me; but you have a cook here who cannot make an omelette."

"You are the Count Von Weder, Monsieur," said the monk, in very good French.

"Yes, my general," replied the Count, without, however, relinquishing his hold of the bowl containing the eggs, or the fork which he was preparing to beat them up with; "I am the Count Von Weder in person."

"Then I conclude you are the gentleman who has brought me this letter of introduction, which our lay brother the porter has just remitted to me?"

"I am the gentleman."

"You are welcome, Monsieur le Comte."

The count bowed.

"I regret only," continued the monk, "that the isolated situation of our convent, and its distance from every habitable place, does not permit us to receive you in better style; but we are poor mountain solitaries, and you will pardon us, I trust, if our table is not better furnished."

"How! how! not better furnished! Why, the supper appears to me, on the contrary, excellent; and when I shall have made this *omelette aux confitures*!"

"But, captain,"—began the cook.

"Give Monsieur some confitures directly, and let him make his omelette as he desires."

The cook obeyed, without breathing another syllable.

"And now," continued the monk, "do not disturb yourself, Monsieur le Comte; make yourself at home I beg, and when you have finished your omelette, come up stairs to us, you will find us waiting for you in the refectory."

"It will be but the affair of five minutes; let them serve the supper, I beg."

"You hear," said the monk to the cook, "serve up supper." So saying, the superior ascended the stairs. An instant afterwards two brothers descended and put themselves at the service of the cook. During this time the triumphant Count proceeded with the manufacture of his omelette; when he had completed it to his satisfaction, he also in turn ascended to the supper room.

He found the superior awaiting his arrival with the entire community, consisting of about twenty brothers, in a well-lighted refectory, down the middle of which was arranged a handsomely furnished board. The Count was astonished at the display of plate which met his eyes, and also at the delicacy of the table cloth and napkins. The convent had evidently drawn from its treasury and store-rooms its very finest plate, and most delicate linen, in order to do honour to the guest. As to the apartment, it presented a singular contrast, through its dilapidated state, with the luxurious display of plate which was spread beneath its old and vaulted roofs.

In addition to this, a complete arsenal of carbines was picturesquely disposed along the walls.

With one glance the Count embraced this splendid *coup d'œil*, and could not help admiring at the same time, the religious self-denial of the worthy fathers who, while possessing such treasures as those now spread out before his eyes, were yet content to live exposed to the inclemency of the weather, even as the ancient solitaries of Mount Carmel.

The superior remarked his astonishment.

"Monsieur le Comte," said he, with a smile, "I have once more to apologize to you for the bad dinner, and worse lodging that you will find here. Perhaps strangers have painted the interior of our convent to you as a garden of delight. You see how society judges us, Monsieur le Comte. So when you return to the world again, I trust that you will do us justice."

"Faith, general," replied the Count; "I know not what can fail in respect to the dinner, for you have a most beautifully organized kitchen below stairs; and unless it is the wine—?"

"Oh," interrupted the superior, "make your mind perfectly easy on that score: the wine is good."

"Well, if the wine is good, that is all that is necessary."

"I fear only," added the superior, "that our habits may appear to you rather unclerical. For instance, it is the usual custom for each of us to sup with a pair of pistols beside his plate; it is a precaution which the lonely situation of our monastery renders absolutely necessary; you will I am sure excuse us if, in spite of your presence, we do not lay aside our old habits."

At these words the superior raised the skirt of his robe and drew from his waistbelt a pair of magnificent pistols, which he forthwith deposited, one on each side his plate.

"Do not derange yourself, general, I beg of you," replied the German; "the pistol is the friend of man; I also have a pair of pistols in my portmanteau. But it is astonishing what a resemblance yours bear to mine."

"Very possible," replied the superior, suppressing a smile; "I had these pistols from Germany: they are Kukenreiter's make."

"Kukenreiter's! that accounts for it; allow me to send for mine, and let us compare arms."

"After dinner, Count, after dinner. Place yourself opposite to me; there, very well. Do you know your *Benedicite*?"

"Upon my word I did know it formerly, but I rather think I have forgotten some of it now."

"I am sorry for that," replied the general, "as I had reckoned upon you to say it; but if you have forgotten it, it cannot be helped."

"Oh no," said the Count, who was of a very accommodating disposition, "it cannot be helped."

And the Count, without urging any further scruples, swallowed

his soup without a *Benedicite*, a proceeding which was speedily followed by the remainder of the brotherhood. As soon as he had finished his soup, the superior pushed a bottle towards him.

"Taste me that wine, Count," said he.

The Count, nothing doubting but that it was a bottle of the very choicest wine that he was called on to pronounce sentence upon, filled his glass to the brim, and holding it up for more than a minute to the light of a lamp, he appeared to contemplate its rich and amber coloured contents with an air of supreme satisfaction; then he approached the glass to his lips and swallowed the wine with all the voluptuous slowness of an accomplished *gourmet*.

"It is astonishing," said the Count; I really thought that I knew every wine that was manufactured, but I must own I am at fault here, unless, indeed, it is Madeira of a new growth."

"It is Marsala, Count, a wine which is not so generally known as it deserves to be. Oh! our poor Sicily! it encloses within its bosom a store of unknown treasures, and similar to this modest and unappreciated, but most rare and excellent wine."

"How did you say it was named?" said the Count, pouring himself out another glass.

"Marsala."

"Marsala, eh! well, it is a good wine; I will purchase some. Is it expensive?"

"Two sous a bottle."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the Count, who fancied he had not heard aright.

"Two sous a bottle," repeated the superior.

"Two sous a bottle! why, you inhabit a terrestial paradise, my dear general; I shan't stir from your island, and from this moment I will make myself a Benedictine."

"Thanks for your preference, Count. When you please to assume the frock, we shall be most happy to receive you."

"Two sous a bottle," repeated the Count to himself, pouring out a third glass of wine.

"I must warn you, however," said the superior, with a smile, "that it has one defect."

"It has no defects," said the Count.

"I beg your pardon; it is very heady."

"Heady, heady!" said the Count, disdainfully; "I could drink a bottle of it with as much ease as though it were lemonade."

"Then do not disturb yourself, I beg; make yourself quite at home; only let me tell you we have other wines on the table."

In virtue of the permission so hospitably accorded to him, the worthy graff set himself to the work of eating and drinking, with that ardour and perseverance only to be found in a German. The monks, incited thereto by their superior, were by no means

behind-hand in seconding the exertions of their guest, so that the religious silence which had at the commencement of the repast reigned round the board, quickly gave place to conversation; each began to speak in a low voice with his neighbour, then after awhile aloud, across the table. At the second service, each began speaking of himself, and recounted the strangest adventures it was possible to hear. The Count, though knowing but little of the Sicilian language, fancied, however, by what he could make out, that the tales he heard chiefly consisted of narrations of daring attacks, performed by brigands, of convents pillaged, gens-d'arms murdered, nuns carried off, and other lawless adventures incidental to robber's life. But, then, he considered that, after all, there was not anything very astonishing in this; the isolated situation of the worthy benedictines, and their distance from the city, must have rendered them more than once the witnesses of similar scenes.

The Marsala still went round, without prejudice, however, to the dry Syracuse, the Calabrian Muscat, and the Malvoisie of Lipari. Strong as was the head of the Count, a mist began to steal gradually over his eyes, and his tongue grew thick and heavy. Then monologues by degrees succeeded to conversation, and songs to monologues. The Count, unwilling to be outdone by his entertainers, sought in the anacreontic stores of his memory for a song, but not finding anything at the moment but the robber song of Schiller, he forthwith began shouting forth, with the utmost strength of his lungs, the famous *Stehlen, morden, huren, balgen*, to which it seemed to him that the monks replied by universal shouts of applause. Ere long, all things appeared to turn and dance around him; he fancied that the monks threw away their frocks, and transformed themselves by degrees into brigands. Those ascetic features seemed to change their character, and became lighted up with an expression of ferocious joy: the dinner degenerated into an orgie. Yet they still drank, and every time they drank, new wines, more capital wines, wines taken from the cellars of Paterno, or, from the canteen of the Dominicans of Ali-Reale; were placed upon the board. They struck loudly upon the table with the empty bottles to demand full ones, and in striking they upset the lamps; the flame then communicated to the cloth, and from the cloth to the supper table; and in place of endeavouring to extinguish them they cast upon the board the chairs and stools and benches. In an instant the table was a vast furnace, around which the monks, now become bandits, danced hand in hand, like so many demons, uttering frantic cries. At length, in the midst of this deafening uproar, the voice of the captain was heard demanding "*Le monache! Le monache!*" A general hurrah greeted this demand. An instant afterwards a side door was thrown violently open and

four nuns appeared, forcibly dragged in by five or six bandits ; yells of joy greeted their arrival. The Count saw all this as if in a dream, and as in a dream it seemed to him that some superior force nailed his body to his place, whilst his spirit was borne away elsewhere. The brigands rushed towards the new arrivals ; the captain endeavoured to make his voice heard, but its sounds were lost in the general clamour. The Count then fancied that the Captain seized those famous Kukenreiters which bore so strong a resemblance to his own. He fancied he heard two reports ; for a moment he closed his eyes, dazzled with the flash. When he re-opened them he beheld blood ; two brigands were lying together in own corner of the hall writhing with pain and rage ; then he saw no more ; his eyes closed a second time, his limbs failed him ; at length he fell as an inert mass from his chair ; he was dead drunk.

When the Count awoke it was broad day-light : he rubbed his eyes ; shook himself, and looked about him ; he was reclining under a tree at the outskirts of a wood ; on his right hand was Nicolosi ; on his left, Pedara ; before him, Catania ; and beyond Catania, the sea. He appeared to have passed the night in the open air, couched upon a soft bed of sand, his head pillow'd by his carpet bag, and without any other canopy than the blue vault of heaven. At first, he could recollect nothing of what had occurred, and remained for some time like a man awaking from a lethargy ; at length his thoughts, by a slow and confused operation at first, began to form themselves into something like systematic order, and soon he recalled to mind, his departure from Catania, the hesitation of the muleteer, his arrival at the convent, his altercations with the cook, the reception he had met with from the general, the dinner, the Marsala, the songs, the orgie, the nuns, and the pistol shots. He again looked round him, and beheld his *malle*, his carpet bag, and his portmanteau : he quickly opened the latter, and there found his portfolio, his *ecume de mer* pipe, his tobacco bag, and his purse : his purse, which, to his great astonishment appeared as round and well garnished as if nothing had occurred ; he opened it with anxiety ; it was still full of gold, and in addition he found a letter addressed to him ; the Count tore it open and read as follows :—

“ **MONSIEUR LE COMTE,**

“ I have to offer you a thousand apologies for the very abrupt manner in which we have separated ; but an expedition of the highest importance calls us to Cefali. I trust that you will not forget the hospitality accorded to you by the Benedictines of St. Nicholas the Elder, and that on your return to Rome you will request Monsignor Morosini to remember the poor sinners in his prayers.

"You will find all your luggage intact, with the exception of your Kukenreiters, which I ask your permission to retain as a remembrance of your visit. " **DON GAETANO,**

"Prior of St. Nicholas the Elder."

"16 Oct. 1806."

The Count von Weder counted his money; not a farthing was missing.

On his arrival at Nicolosi, he found the entire village in a state of uproar: on the evening before, the convent of Santa Clara had been attacked and broken into, the entire of the monastic plate stolen, and four of the youngest and most beautiful of the nuns carried off by the brigands, without any one being able to divine their fate.

Two years after this event, an account appeared in the *Allgemein Zeitung*, stating that the famous robber chief, Gaetano, who had taken possession of the old monastery of St. Nicholas, upon Etna, which he had transformed into a haunt of brigands, after a terrible combat sustained against a Sicilian regiment, had been taken and hung, to the great joy of the inhabitants of Catania, who, even within their own city, had latterly been insecure from his attacks.

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## SWISSIANA.

### CHAPTER XXII.\*

"Here be the trusty gleanings of that field,

\* \* \* \* \*

Who thro' the force of fifteen thousand foes,

Bore off their king, and sav'd his great remains "

**GUSTAVUS VASA.**

We dined at what was called the table d'hôte that evening. There were, however, none present but ourselves, so when the cloth had been removed we drew our chairs round to the centre window, which overlooked the Reuss, and threw up the sash, to enjoy the cool breeze which floated down from the mountains upon the crest of the river. We were sipping our *café noir*, and the Professor was about to commence one of his best stories, when the waiter rushed into the room, and in his native guttural, cried out that the steamer was coming up the lake.

"The Italian refugees, Herrn, the republicans of *Walschland!*"

\* Continued from page 112, vol. lvii.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Professor, with a half sarcastic, half humourous expression of countenance. Ha! so you are a politician, my friend?"

The man thus accosted appeared as if some potent magician had taken an interest in his welfare, and had suddenly transformed him out of his menial calling into that of the disciples of that wayward, *rudderless* goddess, *Egalité*. He drew himself up to his full height, and with fire-flashing eyes scanned our friend the Professor from head to foot, the received symbol of defiance in every country and with every creed, and added in accents trembling with rage:—

"Would you insult me, sir!"

"*Allons, mon cher*," replied the other, in a tone of perfect familiarity, and what the *garçon exasperé* wanted—*equality*. "*Allons!* we are of one mind—we are all compatriots here. *Buvons à la liberté!* Here is the Englishman from his *étang aux harengs*,—the American from his States,—the Frankfurter from

"*Bei Am Mein dem Rhein,*  
*Woman trinkt von rothen Wein—*"

and I (*toujours à vous*) from Heidelberg:—we, the representatives of so many nations, are all anxious to embrace and fraternise with the brave Swiss. *Buvons*, then, *buvons*," and snatching a glass he filled it to the brim with sparkling Rhenish, and handed it over to the patriotic waiter. He then, with a meaning smirk, motioned us to fill also, and we all pledged his toast.

I certainly had my doubts at the commencement of the Professor's speech as to how it would be received by the other party, who, waiter as he was, (and probably *is*,) was really offended. But my friend had not misjudged the man's failings and character; it was precisely the harangue to soothe and please him which he uttered; its absurdity, all things considered, and abounding in grandiloquence, was, I thought, too glaring to escape discovery; but, on the contrary, the waiter was so embedded and encrusted with conceit, and those modern utopian watch-words, *liberty*, *fraternity*, and *equality*, that his ire at once melted like the snow before the summer sun on the Rigi, and he drunk the toast which had been proposed, and a few minutes afterwards, recollecting himself, and forgetting *Egalité*, begged the Professor's pardon.

The latter appeared to take no notice of the man's repentant spirit, however, and dropping the subject abruptly, demanded, much to the poor patriot's relief, if he would conduct us to the quay where the steam-boat he spoke of would come to a halt. We snatched up our hats, and followed our guide, who had run on before without one.

It was a lovely evening. The heat which had reigned all day

had fled with the setting orb, and the temperature had become very agreeable and invigorating. Darkness was settling rapidly upon all around us, and the mighty monarchs of mountains appeared to hem us in closer and added to the gloom. Lights were beginning to glitter from the windows of many of the houses in the town ; and on the left shore of the lake towards Küssnacht, the spacious and elegant hotel of the " Schweitzer Hof," quite a new construction, beamed with lamps before its façade, and from every room, like the picture of a Borgian palazzo at Venice.

A ball of fire was presently seen moving along the lake towards the spot where we were, and in the silence, the sound of a clattering of paddles was heard. It was the steam-boat from Flüelen which thus approached. There were a good many people waiting its arrival like ourselves ; and, I believe, probably led there by a similar spirit of curiosity. Intelligence had arrived on the previous day of a fresh *émeute* at Milan, which however, had been repressed by the vigilance and skill of Radetzky, and many refugees from the scene of anarchy were expected to have escaped across the Alps, and would, it was also thought, have come on at once by the steamer. Our friend the waiter felt in his pocket for his cards, in expectation of business, and scowled at his brethren of the two opposite hotels who had secured a better station on the quay than he had.

The expectation of all was doomed to disappointment. The steam boat arrived with scarcely any passengers, certainly with none of note or of republican interest, and I believe the hotels did not gather a single customer among them. Our small party was about to return homeward, as the evening was waxing chill, when my attention was arrested by a sound of voices in gesticulation and remonstrance close beside me. I looked round, and found the noise to proceed from the three waiters above referred to, who had all seized upon a solitary traveller, who had that moment stepped out of a sailing boat, and who was resisting the importunities of his tormentors by a succession of kicks, and *bruisers* administered with a force and velocity which would have had effect, one would have supposed, in making the champion of England himself give way, but which fell dead before the zeal of competition. I could not distinguish the traveller's features in the gloom of night, and was going to resume my "darkling way," as Fielding Murphy calls it, when a British oath—deserving of a tear from the recording angel for the persecution which extorted it—fell upon my ear. Then, with a waving movement, I beheld the three waiters fell back, and the stranger cast himself free. I rushed up and offered my services to him in English. What was my

surprise when I found them accepted by one of my most intimate friends, no other than Henry S——. Chaining his arm in mine, I gathered from him the reasons which brought him to Lucerne, while we marched back to the hotel, whither the professor and his cubs had preceded me.

My friend was bound for the golden Orient. He was travelling overland, in company with a medical gentleman attached to the Madras Presidency, who had taken his departure on the previous day for Fluelen, being but an indifferent traveller, and not caring to see the Rigi, as my friend, I learnt, had just done. We all supped that evening together, and afterwards toasted success to the long journey S—— and the doctor had before them. The following morning S—— departed in the steamer to join his friend, and promised to write me from Bellinzona or Milan how he should find parties and politics there, and also to give me an account of his passage of the renowned Saint Gothard.

The steamer was soon out sight ; and, as it wanted two hours till breakfast-time, we proposed to occupy ourselves with sight-seeing and lion-hunting in the meanwhile.

I intend no pun when I say that the first "lion" we visited was that of Lucerne itself. Colonel Charles Plyffer, of Altishofen, one of a family well known in the annals of central Switzerland, being the leading man of the canton, was requested by an influential body of the citizens to set on foot a scheme for the establishment of a national monument to commemorate the gallant defence, heroic fidelity, and martyrdom of the Swiss guard, of Louis XVI, on the 10th of August, 1792, at Paris. Local subscriptions were found to be inadequate to fulfil the project in a creditable manner, so the committee, at the suggestion of Colonel Plyffer, appealed to the whole body of the Swiss Republic.—And not in vain : ample funds were soon collected. The great Thorwaldsen was applied to for a subject. He chose a grand and most appropriate one, it is almost universally allowed, and designed it with equal happiness. It is that of a colossal lion, pierced with darts, and on the eve of expiring, with his right paw grasping the standard of France, which can only be torn from him with life. The sculpture is hewn into a rock, in what is called Colonel Plyffer's garden, where it stands out in bold relief. There is a murky looking pond before it, in the form of a semicircle, intended surely as a protection, rather than as an ornament to the piece, which is a noble work, and bears the impress of genius in every feature. No small credit is due to the youthful sculptor who has so ably carried out what Thorwaldsen conceived. His name deserves a record. He was one Lucas Ahorn, a native of Constance. Beneath the lion may be distinctly read, at the distance of

forty feet, the following inscription, which I transcribe from my rough note book, as I pencilled it at the time.

Die X Augusti, II et III Septembris, MDCCXCII.  
Hæc sunt nomina eorum, qui, ne sacramenti fidem fallerent,

Fortissime pugnantes ceciderunt.

Duces XXVI.

Solerti amicorum cura cladi superfuerunt,  
Duces XVI.

Milites circiter DCCLX. Milites circiter CCCL.

Huius rei gestæ circes aere collate perenne monumentum posuere.

I was much gratified by my visit to see this "lion." I could have been better pleased, perhaps, had a wearisome cicerone, in a red coat, not bored us with his exhibition-lesson, and afterwards not worried us till we purchased some petrified lizards, and a picture of the statue in a curiosity-shop hard by. The solemnity of the spot, which in other respects is complete and admirable, was, it appeared to me, disturbed and invaded by such an appendage.

Before entering the garden, we stepped aside to view a small chapel, very near to it, also erected in memory of the Swiss Guard of 1792. The altar cloth is remarkable as being the work of the Dauphiness Maria Theresa of France, and is grounded on a rich crimson silk, beautifully embroidered. I may mention among the other contents of the chapel, that, as a set off to the neighbouring *lion*, it possesses two *bulls* of Pope Pius VII., of blessed memory.

On returning, I and my companions took a path to the right, which brought us to a range of low buildings. These were the "Hot Baths." We all tried them, but they were bleak-looking for want of furniture, and uncomfortable. After our ablutions, we returned to the hotel—breakfasted—and, to lose no time, proceeded an hour after its conclusion to pay a visit to the ancient arsenal of the town.

This building goes under the Teutonic appellation of the "Zeughans." It was erected somewhere about the year 1570. It is a building of no pretensions whatever, and would not merit a moment's attention were it not for the many interesting trophies of ancient Swiss valour which it contains. Among the most remarkable are the relics of William Tell and Leopold of Austria. The suit of chain mail worn by the latter when he fell at Sempach is, perhaps, the most interesting object, as it may be accounted *genuine*. Not so William Tell's sword. Like the blood of Rizzio shown at Holyrood, it may have been prepared for exhibition. It is a huge two-handed weapon, with a pious motto cut into the handle. Strange to say, neither the sword of Tell, nor the armour of Leopold, appeared to find such value in the eyes of the superannuated *beef-eater* who showed

the arsenal, as a tattered and faded banner which hung from the roof of the principal room. With great pride he explained to us that it was a Turkish flag, taken in 1610, before Tunis, by Francis von Sonnenberg, commander of Malta, a native of Lucerne. We also saw the instrument of torture designed by the Austrians for the Swiss in the fourteenth century; and the armour of the bailiff Landenberg, who put out the eyes of Melchthal's father.

Undoubtedly the most interesting objects in Lucerne, as being perfectly unique of their kind, are the covered bridges, three in number, which span the Reuss, and unite together the Grosse and the Kleine Stadt. The most curious is the Mühlenbrücke, the farthest up the river, counting from the lake. It is about 300 feet in length, of irregular form, and very ancient. It was built in 1403, under the superintendance of one Megliner, who ornamented it with a number of paintings on each side the several partitions into which its roof is divided, representing Holbein's "Dance of Death." The second bridge is almost equally ancient, but, being uncovered, presents no very striking feature to notice. The third, running half-ways into the lake itself, is called the Kappelbrücke, from being that which leads directly to the principal church, or cathedral. It dates its existence to a period more remote even than the two others; namely, to Anno Domini 1300. It is one thousand feet in length, and possesses no less than one hundred and fifty-four pictures, placed like those of the first bridge, and representing chiefly historical subjects of Swiss interest.

The origin of the name of Lucerne is, as usual, involved in doubt and variety of opinion. It is, to say the truth, an inquiry of but little profit, and I would not have alluded to it now, had it not been called before me by the remembrance of a solitary tower rising out of the lake, close in front of the last-named bridge, which it behoves me not to pass over. From its situation, the tower is called the "Wasserthurm," and has been ascribed to the Romans—hence the name of *Lucerna* to the tower, from the latin *lucerna*, a lanthorn or beacon.—(light-house?)

The environs of Lucerne are strikingly beautiful. Without comprising in them even the neighbouring mountains, I may safely aver that no town in the world possesses greater attractions, in point of scenery, so close within its reach. Ascend the course of the Reuss, and novel beauties reveal themselves at every step. Follow the route to Alpnach, beside the Mont Pilate, which Philipson and his son Arthur travelled on their way from Italy, and which led them first to know Anne of Geierstein, and us of later days to become acquainted with one of mighty Scott's most delightful and most picturesque stories. The walk to Küssnacht, as we shall see, is no less enchanting.

In fact, go where you will, turn to what side you may, beauty of land and water meets the gaze. The eye, surfeited and overfeasted, retires from so many objects of admiration, and, as a counter-influence, rests itself upon the inhabitants of the town. These, especially the weaker sex, are plain enough. Sharp features, prominent cheek-bones, hard and severe cast of countenance, and bad teeth, are not the concomitants of beauty in woman-kind !

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### THE JESUIT QUESTION.

"Of confederacy, with superiors every one knows the inconvenience. With equals, no authority ; every man his own opinion—his own interest."

DR. JOHNSON.

"Well was it for the world,  
When on their borders neighbouring princes met,  
Frequent in friendly parle, by cool debates  
Preventing wasteful war ; such should our meeting  
Have been, hadst thou but held in just regard  
The sanctity of leagues so often sworn to."—TAMERLANE.

A VISIT to both the Jesuits' Church and the House of Assembly in the same afternoon naturally led us to enquire into the relative merits of the two. I mean the question whether Lucerne should be ruled by priestcraft, or by the federal voice.

The year 1844, which saw the proposition for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Switzerland—the cause of all the agitations that have taken place in that country since—first mooted, was that of the sitting of the Federal Diet at Lucerne. We have already seen in an early part of this tour, how greatly the indignation of the whole republic was excited by the conduct of the catholics of the Valais, against their protestant brethren, headed by the brothers Barman ; and upon the assembling of the Diet in July of the same year, the deputy of the canton of Argovia proposed the expulsion of the Jesuits from Switzerland. He was unsupported by the other states, however, and as if in sheer contempt of the antipathy he manifested, Lucerne, which had never suffered the Jesuits within its boundaries before, determined to introduce them now. Zurich and all the other cantons at once denounced this resolution, with the exception of the Valais, Schwytz, and Fribourg, the chief cradles of Jesuitism in Switzerland, and who of course highly approved of it.

In the face of all this public disapprobation, it is clearly evident that the proceedings of Lucerne, were, to say the least of them, extremely injudicious. Müller, the president, defended them on the grounds, that the question was a *cantonal*, and not a *federal* one. This line of argument should never have

come from Lucerne at the time it did, seeing that it was then the presiding canton, and should have been an example of obedience, rather than a fomenter of discord and contempt for the Federal Pact. "What wonder," exclaims a journalist of the time, "that the harmony of Switzerland has perished, when its directing canton adopts such measures for its rule of proceeding?"

It was not without opposition, even on the part of a large body of the citizens themselves, that the motion for the introduction of the Jesuits into Lucerne was carried at the cantonal "Grand Conseil." Dr. Casimir Plyffer, a brother of the colonel of the same name, one of the leading men in Switzerland, in particular, protested vehemently against the proceeding, as one that violated the articles of the constitution, and that its consequences might be of the most serious character. He spoke not unprophetically!

Some of those who happened to coincide with Dr. Plyffer, and who displayed the most opposition, were arrested by the cantonal authorities, and thrown into prison. This served but to add fuel to the flame which the previous doings of Lucerne in the Valais had kindled in the hearts of the liberal public throughout Switzerland against the Jesuits; and to such an extent, that the sympathizers actually took the law into their own hands, and marched against the town, under the title of the "Corps Francs." They were, however, easily put down, and many of them imprisoned.

In this serious state of affairs an extraordinary Diet was convened at Zurich in 1845, which strongly condemned the proceedings of the "Corps Francs," and required each canton to punish those of its subjects who had joined it. This was, however, of no effect. In the following month of April, Colonel Ochsenbein headed a second "Corps Francs" more numerous and better organized than the first, which would have succeeded in taking Lucerne, had it not been for the assistance which the neighbouring cantons of Unterwalden, Uri, and Zug, afforded to the besieged. Numbers fell on both sides.

This most injudicious, not to say flagrant, proceeding of the "Corps Francs" did more to injure their own cause than aught else could have done. By their attack, they made Lucerne appear in the eyes of Europe, as the injured and persecuted party.

In February, 1845, the Diet assembled at Zurich was startled in the midst of its proceedings by the intelligence of a revolution in the Canton of Vaud. Sympathy for the Bas-Valaisans, animosity against the Jesuits, and indignation at the underhand and treacherous part of Lucerne, were its chief incentives. A protest, signed by seven-eighths of the inhabitants of the canton, was not admitted, but rejected, by the "Grand Conseil," and the consequences we are about to relate immediately

followed. The citizens of Lausanne and Vevay flew to arms; and when the militia was called out to proceed against them, that body was found to be among the sympathisers, and refused to act. The people thus triumphant, compelled the ministry to resign, and, with Mr. Drouet for its president, elected a Provisional Government. No more serious consequence than this change in the rulers of the canton ensued, property and life were everywhere respected; and, when the citizens had shown what they *could* do, they retired peaceably to their several occupations.

In the mean time, the mischief done to the Liberal cause by the rash and unauthorised attack of the "Corps Francs" upon Lucerne, began to show its results. The cantons which had secretly connived at Colonel Ochsenbein and his free-company were sentenced by the Federal voice to make an indemnity in the shape of money to the parties injured; and the Diet availed themselves of the opportunity to condemn in the strongest terms all those parties who had thus taken the law into their own hands.

Lucerne should have been content with this apology and indemnity. But, swollen with its own importance and success, it did not. There is a limit even to sympathy, and they outstripped the mark, and lost it, when they announced to the whole of Switzerland that they had allied themselves along with the other Catholic cantons, into an armed league, called the SONDERBUND.

The cantons confederated under this appellation were Lucerne, Schwytz, Unterwalden, Uri, Fribourg, Zug, and the Valais. One of the articles of the Federal Pact has this clause:—

"No pacts, alliances, or other negotiations, calculated to disturb the harmony of the general confederation, or prejudicial to its interests, shall be allowed with any of the cantons among each other." If the Federal Pact be of any value at all, how then shall we defend the legality of the Souderbund?

To examine rightly this question, we must trace it from its source, and go further back than the mere invasion of the 'Corps Francs.' If the Sonderbund, as it is alleged by its supporters, and with perfect truth, be a sequence of this aggressive expedition, we must inquire what led to the latter. Glance over the past, and we find that the 'Corps Francs' originated in the conduct of the Jesuits, abetted by Lucerne, then a leading canton in the Valais.

In October, 1847, the Federal Diet proclaimed war upon the cantons which comprised the Sonderbund, justly remarking, as they called all Switzerland to take part with them in the conflict, that there must either be some authority, or none at all. The cantons of the Sonderbund, meanwhile, prepared to resist what they deemed an infringement of their rights; and if

their forces were inferior in number, they were animated by the proud recollection of the deeds of their forefathers, whom they regarded as the only true, *original* Swiss, and their resistance, they determined, should be an obstinate one.

The Diet issued a decree, calling on the Liberal cantons to furnish forth 50,000 troops. The Cantons of the Sonderbund, meantime, were not idle. They rendered all the approaches and roads to their districts impracticable; and placed mines in different places along them. They were encouraged, too, by large bodies of Austrian and French troops, which approached the Swiss frontier, and sent sympathetic messages to them.

Salis de Soglio commanded the insurgents, as we choose to call the members of the Sonderbund, although our verdict may be opposed by many. He was an old and experienced campaigner, and knew how to make the most of associations and prejudice. He had a bombastic, theatrical tone about him, which took with the people whom he addressed; and he knew how to rouse their pride by recurring to the days of ancient Swiss valour.

The Federalists, or liberals, it must be confessed, were not so ably commanded. Dufour was a conscientious and brave man, but sadly wanting in resolution—a quality which in dealing with rebels is almost indispensable. He would not at first accept the chief command, doubting the legality of the war. In consequence of this, many of his soldiers mistrusted him.

Fribourg was the most strongly fortified place of the Sonderbund army. The entrances to the town were strengthened by huge timber stockades, and undermined in every direction with layers of powder-traps. The famous suspension-bridge, loftier and longer than the Menai, was destroyed, in order to cut off all communication with the citadel. The most feeble point was the Jesuits' college, which they strengthened with three large mortars, and garrisoned with four hundred soldiers. General Maillairdoz, a fine old veteran who commanded the Swiss Guard at Paris during the revolution of 1830, was at the head of affairs in Fribourg.

The result of all these preparations for war, being of recent date, is so well known, that I shall not enter into further details here. Suffice it, that the Sonderbund was overthrown.

In the foregoing, I have been desirous of placing this question (the legality of the Sonderbund) in its proper light, by tracing the causes which first led to its adoption to their proper source. The question has been sadly misconstrued in England. It was deemed a tyranny of the Protestants over the Catholics, whereas, if we think upon the cruel treatment of the latter of their brethren of the former creed in the Valais, we shall find that it was exactly opposite.